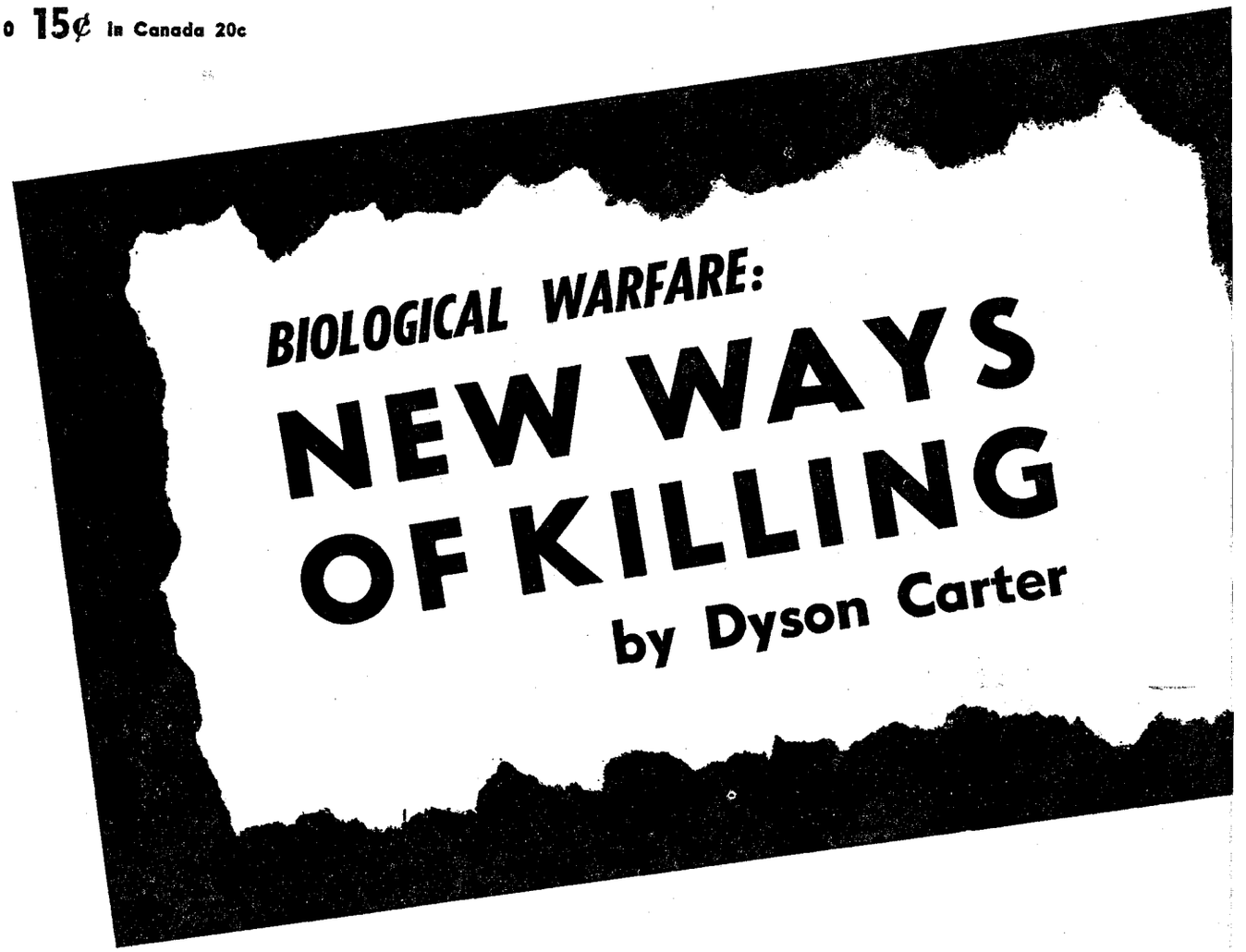
new masses

SEPTEMBER 3, 1946

Vol. LX, No. 10 15¢ In Canada 20c



TERROR IN PALESTINE *by Moses Miller*

DREISER'S SHORT STORIES *by Howard Fast*

THE YUGOSLAV "CRISIS" *by John Stuart*

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just a minute

Two observers of about six and four were sitting on our front steps the other day discussing the world scene. The conversation swung around to super-weapons.

"My pa's gonna get me a real machine-gun," said the four-year-old. "I kin kill everyone I wanna with it," he added thoughtfully.

"Aah, who wants a old machinegun!" scorned his colleague. "That don't mean nothin'. I know what's worse'n that. You know what's the worse thing there is?" he paused rhetorically. "A formula! A secret formula! You know what a formula is?"

"Sure," muttered the youngest one.

"What is it?"

"I kin jump down three steps at a time," offered the baby hopefully. "Kin you?"

"A formula's a terrible secret weapon," continued the Major Eliot. "It's worse'n a rocket or a bomb or anything! You drop it right on top of people's heads and oh boy! It kin kill millions of people! Billions!"

"Trillions!" screamed the little one, overjoyed.

Of course, it may have been some of Byrne's diplomatic formulas the older strategist was referring to, in which case we probably misjudged the conversation altogether; but at the time it struck us that kids probably see about five times more movies and listen goggle-eyed to about twenty times more radio programs than are good for them. No harassed mother has to be told what a problem it is finding decent, non-bloodthirsty entertainment for her offspring; we feel it's one of the many problems that must be tackled by progressives.

And we're glad to announce that NEW MASSES is about to make a beginning in this direction. Starting on October 26 and running for four consecutive Saturday afternoons we will present, at Carnegie Hall, a children's program of a progressive nature which will include music, magicians and chalk talks. Subscriptions for the series are $3.50; single tickets $1.00. And the first fifty young subscribers are promised a free tour through a radio-television studio.

SUMMER on the farm can be fun—and fruitful. We have in mind the fine crop of lettuce—$100—raised at a Saturday night party recently by guests at Fred Briehl's Brookside Farm, Walkill, N. Y. Paul Kaye, our business manager, who gave us this item, thinks that there is an object lesson involved for all our friends who find themselves down on the farm (any farm) these days. But since all regular NM readers are conscious of our unending battle against the demon deficit—well, take it from there.

REMEMBER the mysterious "personal" note we ran a few weeks ago asking the reader who sent in a Canadian five-dollar bill to get in touch with our business office? In case you were wondering, it was perfectly good legal tender—it was just that we'd lost the sender's name and address. (Incidentally, we might remark at this point that it's best not to send cash through the mail, if it can be avoided.) Anyway, we had a letter from the sender, J.C. of Toronto, soon after. She wrote: "I've been ashamed not to have done my share in the past, but you know what each of us are eternally up against with the thousand and one branches of our work locally. I give everything I have left from living expenses out of salary, but hope to be able to manage an increased portion to NM soon. At the moment Fred [Rose] must come first, though even this need is inseparable from NM's."

Ruth Treppel, our head bookkeeper, wrote J.C. to thank her for her note, and the other day J.C. wrote to thank Ruthie for *her* note—and enclosed another fiver. Ruthie, who takes such things personally, has put J.C. down as one of her favorite readers, and we can't say we blame her.

COMING soon: "Georgia, The Invisible Empire State," by Dr. W. E. B. DuBois; "Frederick Engels: Philosopher," by Howard Selsam; an article on the Vatican by V. J. Jerome; "What the German Communists Are Doing," by Arthur Kahn; and "William Faulkner: a Critique," by Annette Rubinstein. The article on H. G. Wells by Peter Ayre which we had planned for this issue has been unavoidably delayed. We hope to publish it shortly. B. M.

new masses

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New Ways of Killing Dyson Carter 3
The Yugoslav "Crisis": an editorial John Stuart . . 6
Gropper's Cartoon 7
Terror in the Promised Land Moses Miller . . . 8
Portside Patter Bill Richards 10
Dreiser's Short Stories Howard Fast 11
New Life in Prague Walter Storm 13
War: a poem Lewis Allan 15
Three Stars for Mr. Grum: a short story Mort Braus 16
Talk in Monroe Lawrence Gellert 20
Mail Call 22
Book Reviews 23
Films of the Week Thomas McGrath 27
The Clearing House Ruth Starr 30

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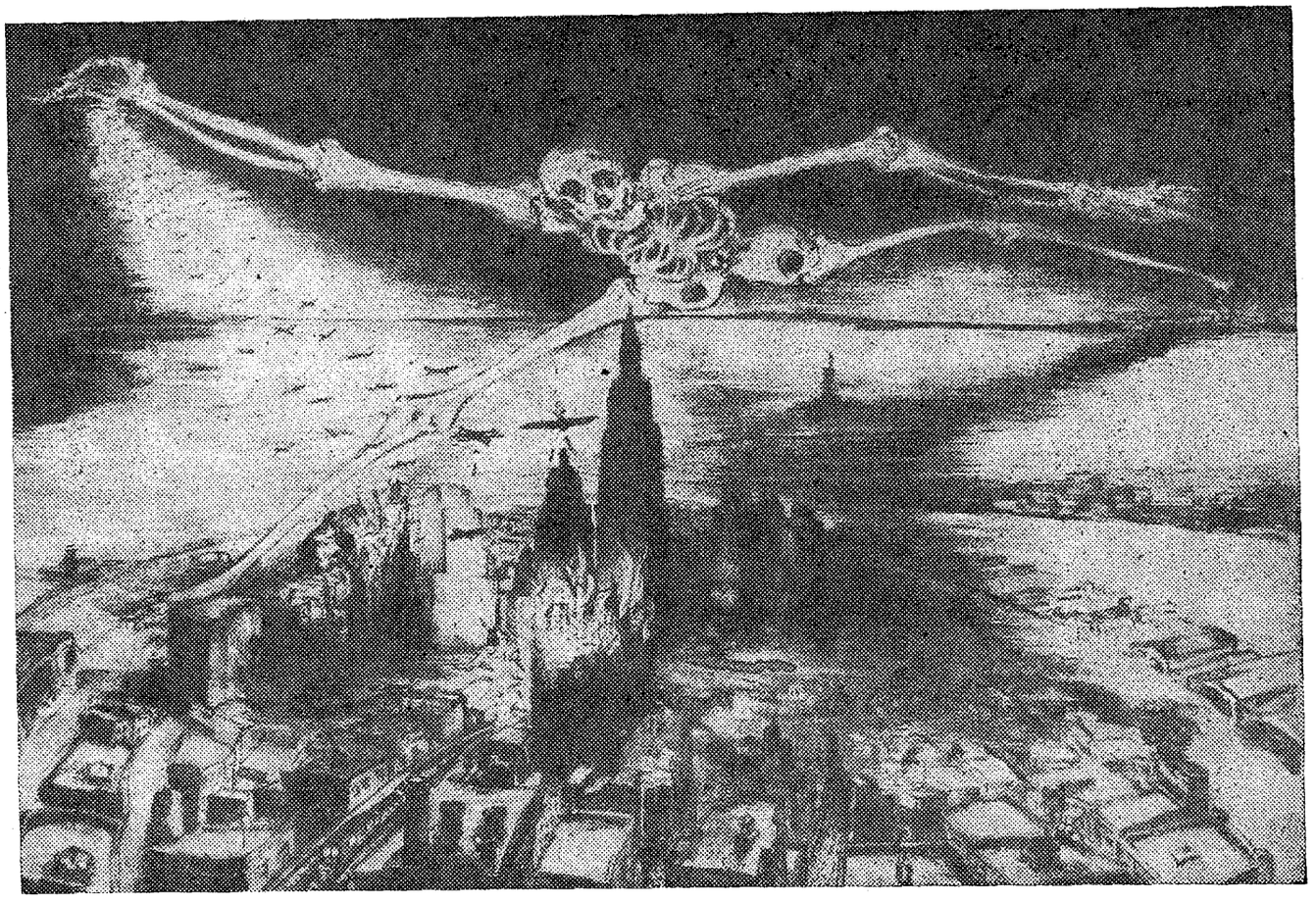

NEW WAYS OF KILLING

A Canadian scientist describes the plans for biological warfare. "Upon the people, organizing for the defense of peace, rests our only hope . . ."

By DYSON CARTER

WE HAVE all read emotional predictions of what an atomic war would be like. But it is now admitted by informed scientists that the atom bomb is a "merciful" weapon, of limited killing power, compared to the arms of biological warfare.

These incredibly barbarous weapons have received little attention in the press. However, enough information has been released from censorship to give us a clear if not a complete idea of what biologists and biochemists have already achieved. Stripped of technical disguises the facts show us vividly how we shall die if a World War III comes.

We need to examine these facts not in a spirit of horrified curiosity but because they teach us simple and powerful truths about the urgency of the struggle for peace. Here knowledge can be forged into *our* super weapon. If we can give the people an understanding of biological warfare we shall greatly strengthen our weapons, the armaments of peace.

Any nation could wage biological warfare. The weapons are fundamentally superior to atom bombs, technically and strategically, because they are very cheap, they can be turned out in small factories modestly equipped and manned by few scientists, and they could be prepared in absolute secrecy. Unlike the atom bomb, poison gases and all previous weapons, many biological arms cannot be called off by an armistice, and some will enormously increase their own killing power after they have been set in action, without further effort by the attacker.

It is even realistic to conceive of the ultimate in horror: devastating biological destruction breaking out weeks or months after the warmaking nation had actually started the attack, with the victims remaining for some time in ignorance as to who was the aggressor.

As is well known, disease has played a decisive part in many wars. In fact, up to World War I epidemic diseases usually caused more military casualties than did weapons. As early as 1870 when bacteriology was still groping toward basic knowledge of disease, Bloxam, the English chemist and military advisor, seriously advocated that the British army experiment with artillery shells loaded with small-pox

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germs. During the first World War the American doctor Davis revealed to the University of Illinois' College of Medicine that some attention was being paid to germ warfare, which he condemned as "repellent to every sense of honor and fair play." He was referring to the long-censored attempt by German agents in 1915 to infect Allied horses and cattle with virulent diseases.

That attempt was a failure. Much earlier, during attacks on Crimean cities in the fourteenth century, the Tartars are reliably said to have hurled upon the defenders parts of corpses dead from plague. And Pizarro's troops deliberately gave Indians clothes from small-pox victims, starting uncontrollable epidemics which caused some 3,000,000 deaths in Mexico and Central America.

Germ warfare was relegated to the realm of science fantasy for two opposite reasons: plagues may attack friend and foe indiscriminately, and the advance of immunization made disease dissemination increasingly difficult. As late as 1941 eminent American scientists considered biological warfare to be completely impractical. However, that same year the National Academy of Science and the National Research Council presented new confidential facts to the Secretary of War who already had Allied spy reports concerning German and Japanese experiments in biological warfare. The facts were not alarming, and the scientists simply urged that the "debatable question" should be investigated by planned research.

Suddenly in the summer of 1942 a super-secret committee took over that work. This "War Research Service" drew specialists from all over the nation. Their findings were decisive. Within twelve months the Chemical Warfare Service of the Army was called upon to organize large-scale development. The next year mass production laboratories were started at Camp Detrick in Maryland, followed by plants in Mississippi, Utah and Indiana.

FEW people—including technicians—have grasped the enormity of this work. Its secrets have been more rigidly and successfully guarded than the atomic bomb. Canada and Britain participated in restricted projects, but some 3,900 scientists and military technicians were mobilized in America alone, backed by very heavy cash expenditures. But the extent of the work is less significant than the results achieved.

We must understand that biological warfare is much broader than germ warfare. It now covers three general types of weapons. First: living disease organisms such as bacteria, fungi, viruses and rickettsias. Second: toxins extracted from such organisms. Third: synthetic chemicals which destroy or distort life in ways quite different from the action of poisons. In general, there are varieties of these weapons which can be used against human beings, animals or plants.

Some publicity has been given to the toxins. The significant fact here is that for the first time biochemists have isolated in pure form the "poisons" by which certain disease organisms produce illness and death in our bodies. These substances are so incredibly potent that newspaper readers have dismissed the popularized reports as fantastic. But recently in *Science* a statement by Lamanna, McElroy and Eklund gave facts regarding a toxin extracted from the botulinus organism. One gamma of this protein substance will kill half a dozen adults. About 30,000,000 gammas make up one ounce. Hence one ounce of the pure toxin would be more than sufficient to kill almost every man, woman and child on this continent.

We know this is cold fact because comparable substances, of opposite effect, have already been used to give immunity against certain diseases. For example a pure vaccine has been extracted from pneumococcus organisms. Injected into human beings this gives protection against more than fifty types of pneumonia. Tens of thousands of people have already been given the vaccine, and these tests show that one ounce will immunize half a million. A more potent vaccine was developed by men from Western Reserve University for use against tetanus. On the other hand, there is also a tetanus toxin, one ounce of which could provide fatal doses for more than 100,000,000 people.

Last May, Rep. Albert Thomas told Congress that the Navy had a weapon "far more deadly than the atomic bomb." He was probably referring to the extraordinary project completed by the most secret of all our scientific bodies, Naval Medical Research Unit No. 1, headed by Capt. Albert Paul Krueger. This dealt with pneumonic plague, the disease caused by the same germs as bubonic plague but spread directly through the air from victim to victim, instead of through fleas. Quite likely NMRU No. 1 has mass-produced both pneumonic plague toxin and the infecting agent, each of deadliness similar to that of the botulism and tetanus proteins.

Therefore we can foresee a war in which the aggressor would secretly or openly spread fearfully potent toxins or infectious agents within the victim nation. Meanwhile the aggressor's population might be immunized against the disease used.

In this latter notion there is no comfort. For us, biological warfare differs in a real and ghastly way from atomic war. While it is possible that no other nation may have an atomic weapon for some time, we can be certain that a number of other countries possess biological arms now. We can also be sure that if our imperialists carry us into another war, for every atomic bomb we hurl, our opponents will reply with infinitely worse weapons. The majority of us would perish before our scientists could develop protective measures.

And their efforts would be useless, because the enemy would change his diseases or toxins before immunizing means could be found. What has happened can be simply expressed: science has discovered how to develop new types of disease organisms—giving us new plagues and new poisons—in a way not remote from the breeding of new flowers, vegetables and grains. This is an exceedingly complex and largely secret subject, but we have an inkling of what has been achieved in this year's Eli Lilly award to Dr. Maclyn McCarty. At a meeting of bacteriologists, immunologists and pathologists, McCarty told how he used natural enzymes like desoxyribo-nuclease to change disease germs from one type to another. It is reasonable to presume that such experiments were primitive in the WRS and NMRU. Today synthetic chemicals and radiations are employed to create new strains of virulent organisms. The number of possible diseases cannot be estimated.

In everyday language this can be viewed two ways. First, just as the sulfa drugs are enormously more effective against disease than previously known chemicals, so the new "synthetic diseases" kill with awesome power. Secondly, each disease of this kind represents a weapon strategically comparable to the atomic bomb—a secret weapon possessed for the time being by only one nation. Hence, nations warring with biological arms would be on an equal footing. But the weap-

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ons would be so destructive that in striving to murder each other all would be committing suicide.

By way of contrast we should note that this research is of bewildering peacetime value to humanity, for it gives us wholly new ways to eliminate serious diseases. At present the military censorship guards these lifesaving secrets behind machine-guns. The only beneficial discoveries so far disclosed are of use to poultry and cattle!

IF THE direct destruction of human life were not enough, another branch of biological research has concentrated upon methods of mass starvation by means of wiping out basic crops. Included are new kinds of rusts, bacterial rots and virus diseases. The most spectacular results were obtained with synthetic hormones which selectively distort the growth of certain plants. One of these is the weed-killer 2-4-D. Its military counterparts lay waste to useful plants like the cereals and legumes, while with diabolical selectiveness they allow ragweed and thistles to grow unharmed. The authorities admit that we were ready to use one such chemical on a mass scale against Japan. Spread early in the rice season with no apparent effect, this "growth regulator" would have permitted the crop to approach the harvest stage, when vast areas would have withered away suddenly. In a recent issue of *Science* men of the Special Projects Division (Chemical Warfare Service) admitted that the results reported thus far are "only the beginning."

Once again in contrast, biochemists have been allowed to say that many of the hormones are of revolutionary importance to farming. One withers away potato leaves at harvest time, improving the yield and gathering of the tubers. Others enable us to produce fruits without pollination or seeds. George W. Merck summarizes the perspective thus: "Every agricultural or horticultural practice which affects growth, development, ripening or storage, can be influenced to economic advantage."

Suppose we go beyond this exciting vision. Science has produced a pure substance, one ounce of which will kill a hundred million people. A handful of another chemical will rid a thousand farms of weeds. Still another will change bacteria when diluted 400,000,000,000 times. What do these facts mean? Research has begun to probe the secrets of life, growth and death. We are approaching the hitherto unknown substances which control the living cell in health and sickness, its reproduction and inheritance factors, the catalysts of life.

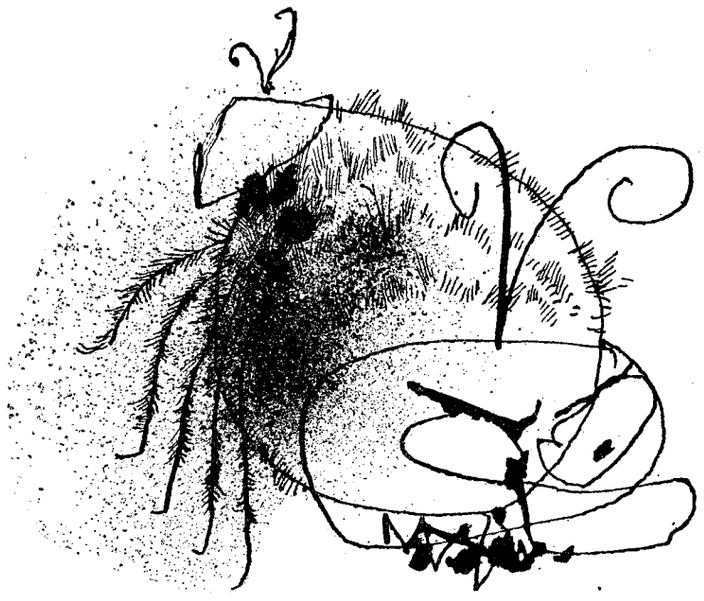
We are on the verge of reversing the course of disease, not with "medicines" or even anti-biotics like penicillin but by using catalysts which counteract the very catalysts causing the symptoms of illness. What is more, other catalysts show us that we may soon begin to control evolution and heredity, at first in plants and animals, later in respect to man's heritable defects. From explorers our scientists are about to become creators on a scale as majestic as the poetry of Genesis.

But the realities of research harnessed by imperialism are nauseating. Seventeen million people now living in North America will die of cancer if medicine does not advance its knowledge of this disease. Yet we find biological war research seeking the "growth regulators" of cancer with the aim of winning horrifying new substances which would doom whole populations with uncontrollable cancer, as surely and swiftly as methyl cholanthrene produces the disease in laboratory animals.

To repeat: for us as people the really incisive fact is that other nations have and are developing biological weapons. This is the essence of Joliot-Curie's warning to the British Association of Scientific Workers in February when he said that America's atomic energy secrecy drives other countries to "produce more treacherous and more terrible weapons." The reactionaries and their propagandists must be aware of the menace. But should we be surprised that they continue the drive to war? Here we see the pattern of Munich repeated. On the chance that the Soviet Union might be overwhelmed by bombs and toxins they are willing to stake our cities and towns, our crops and cattle, our lives by the tens of millions.

OVER and above all other facts about biological warfare we must understand, regardless of vague assurances in the press, that science positively does not hold out any hope of protecting ourselves against the new weapons. Some of these are self-propagating. Today science is still unable to control outbreaks of long-studied diseases such as pneumonic plague, polio, potato blight and rusts. With these, as Dr. Frank Thorne points out, "Their mischief is wrought blindly and spontaneously, they have no aid from a malicious enemy in getting started." Uniquely new plagues, together with radically effective means of spreading them, would cause slaughter appalling even to the eyewitnesses of Hiroshima.

Certainly the Soviet Union is engaged in research of this kind. The Academy of Science's Microbiology Institute ranks among the world's most advanced institutions. Its director, Vitali Rischkov, recently won a Stalin Prize for his basic studies of virus disease. In my files I have just found a clipping which describes Rischkov's work on ribose-nucleic acid and viruses —three years old. But we would be making a ridiculously naive mistake to pose the problem of biological warfare in terms of American vs. Soviet science. Many other nations, not a few of whom rightly consider themselves grimly shadowed by Truman-Attlee-King diplomacy, are frantically



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spurring their laboratories in the race for super catalysts of death.

Watson Davis, director of Science Service, early this year described the situation with admirable simplicity: "The only hope is to bring germs and atoms alike into the open so that they may be controlled in the interest of all peoples."

It is a tragedy that many scientists have supported the State Department plan for atomic energy "control" or have subscribed to the utopian scheme of "World Government" put forward to further American imperialism, to sabotage Big Three unity and the United Nations. These actions reflect on the political level the intolerable tragedies unfolding in the personal lives of our most talented researchers. Would that Shakespeare and Gorky were alive now . . . to dramatize the conflicts of scientists who, having found the secret of banishing polio or the plagues of Asia, must lock that miracle in a War Department vault each night, and then seduce their minds to conceive its opposite: a pestilential deformer of chromosomes, or a key that will unlock cancer in the cells of every body, or a neurosyphilis toxin with power to send millions to a madhouse death!

Only the people can save our scientists from the maniacal plot which, unless it is halted, will surely destroy them along with world peace. Now the upholders of exploitation are starkly revealed as literally the enemies of life. And upon the people, organizing for the defense of peace, rests our only hope of rescuing all the world's intelligence and culture.

A great many references were consulted. Among these were:

Waksman, S. A., to the Westinghouse Centennial Forum, May 17, 1946 (original paper sent to author).

Merck, G. W., to the W. C. Forum, May 16, 1946 (original paper).

Release from Camp Detrick (USCWS) of May 16, 1946 and May 25, 1946.

Release from NAMRU, Washington, January 4, 1946.

Release from Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, re Eli Lilly award, May 24, 1946.

War Dept. Report released January 3, 1946.

Various items in *Science* and the biochemical press.

THE YUGOSLAV "CRISIS"

An editorial by JOHN STUART

If Hitler is dead his ghost hides in State Department closets. Nazidom's nightmare diplomacy could not have carried off with greater skill what Washington last week attempted against Yugoslavia. There was the same bluster and provocation; the wild, inspired headlines; the same parade of might with troops in full battle regalia and American warships steaming over the Mediterranean; there was the same cabled "ultimatum" designed to produce the jitters and incense the country against Tito. There were the demands and the threats. The trigger-happy marched up and down the newspaper columns screaming for blood. Hitler's techniques have not been lost in the ruins of Berlin.

Time will pass and the facts will crowd out of hidden corners to expose the madness. But the facts, the few that are available, already tell a story. And the most important of all is that American policy towards Yugoslavia was responsible for the death of American fliers. For six months Belgrade had been complaining to the appropriate authorities that American planes were violating Yugoslav territory. The same protests were made to London against flights by British planes. In a strange demonstration of understatement, Mallory Browne in the New York *Times* of August 23, 1946 nevertheless reported, for example, that "Britain's reply [to Yugoslavia's protests] admitted that there might have been some fault on her side. . . . The Yugoslav's themselves insist that it is not a case of a few isolated planes getting lost, but of large numbers of planes flying over Yugoslavia. This appears to be supported by statements from the American crew of the first plane shot down that they knew of many such flights."

There is no doubt, then, that Yugoslav sovereignty was repeatedly flouted and that Yugoslav protests were ignored. Moreover, there is every reason to believe that the planes making these flights included bombers and fighters. Such flights could never be made over American territory without prior permission yet the United States arrogates such rights to herself, thereby trampling on international law. It was tragically inevitable, therefore, that Americans would be hurt as a consequence of their government's failure to halt these sorties, just as Yugoslavs would be hurt if they sent their planes zooming over a corner of Maine in the east, or Washington in the west.

The incident of the planes is only one in a long list of others which the State Department has used against Yugoslavia. The pin-pricking began from the moment the Yugoslavs, having freed themselves from the Germans, refused to enslave themselves to British and American bankers. The Yugoslavs will not be stampeded into the Ango-American economic jungle or permit themselves to be "Schachtized" with the Hjalmar Schachts this time coming from London and Washington instead of Berlin. Yugoslavia is turning out to be a country which cannot be cowed by demonstrations of military power. Here is the heart of State Department hostility towards Belgrade, with the plane incident serving as a means of thwarting the Balkan nationalization program and people's control of government.

No roaring from abroad will convert Yugoslavia into another Greece. Nor will "ultimatums" convert her into an image of China's Kuomintang dictatorship. If Athens and Nanking represent the kind of governments which win State Department respect and support, the Yugoslav's will have none of it. They have not lost ten percent of their population (if the figure were applied to Americans it would be 14,000,000) killed and missing to have others turn the clock backward. And turning the clock backward is the sole mission of the American representatives in Belgrade. It is common knowledge that American embassy officials spend delightful evenings with ex-King Peter's friends, that they have a pathological hatred for all that is fresh and promising in the country, that Richard C. Patterson has become known in Balkan diplomatic circles as America's ambassador to the

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opposition. Nor is it a secret that Harold Shantz, the counsellor of the embassy and Patterson's political advisor, associates with the Yugoslav reactionaries who count on an Anglo-American war against the Soviet Union in order to regain control of the country. Some day, too, the whole story will be told how Shantz pleaded to have Mikhailovitch removed from the list of war criminals.

These are the men who express the State Department's solicitude for small nations. But the hokum stands exposed. Mr. Byrnes and the administration and their journalistic claques are tender toward small nations only when they conform to what the State Department thinks is good for them. You are free to think, they say, only as we think, and all other thoughts are violations of freedom.

Yet there is more to the State Department's frenzy over Yugoslavia than this patent hypocracy over small nations. Behind it is the attempt to create an atmosphere at the Paris conference in which the Eastern European states, and Yugoslavia in particular, will be forced to accept agreements inimical to their interests and threatening to their security. It is easy to see that the outburst against Yugoslavia was to obstruct an equitable and democratic settlement of the Trieste issue. It takes no extraordinary perception to see that Mr. Byrnes is inflaming world opinion against Tito for the singular purpose of "proving" that he cannot be trusted with the control of a European port. Nor does it take special insight to conclude that through the Yugoslav incident Byrnes is in a position to withdraw from commitments he made in draft treaties prepared by the Council of Foreign Ministers.

At rock bottom all the fire-eating words issuing from the State Department are intended to widen the gulf among the leading allies. The Yugoslav affairs is symptomatic of that breach, for if the leading powers were functioning harmoniously there is nothing that happened in the last week which could not be adjusted in a half-hour of friendly talk. Instead American imperialism chose the diplomatic club, this time without the velvet wrapping. And one need only read Elliott Roosevelt's current articles in *Look* magazine to see how the "path of Franklin Roosevelt has been grievously—and deliberately—forsaken" by Truman. This madness can become a prelude to even greater madness. The method in the madness is to corrode the American mind with caustic lies, to make Americans believe that a country of 15,000,000 is threatening a country of 140,000,000, that a country whose economic life has dropped seventy percent is menacing the most advanced industrial state in the world. Hitler tried this method of fable, and falsehood and forgery. But where is Hitler now?

TERROR IN THE PROMISED LAND

Behind the mass arrests, shootings and deportation looms the plot to partition Palestine, to make of a Jewish "state" a British barracks.

By MOSES MILLER

PALESTINE is today in the grip of a ruthless terror instigated by the British and executed with a cruelty reminiscent of Hitler's Gestapo. Military rule has been clamped down. Homes are raided without warrants and on the slightest pretext. Jews are dragged from their beds in the middle of the night and are held incommunicado for weeks and sometimes months. Curfews are imposed with increasing regularity and are already undermining whatever economic life the country possessed. And during the course of these curfews, many of them for as long as twenty-two hours at a stretch, those who have ventured to show their faces at a window have been shot at. In Tel-Aviv a number of children were badly wounded as a result of such incidents.

The people of Palestine have been deprived of the most elementary rights. Patrols march unceasingly through the streets of cities and towns and in recent raids on Tel-Aviv, tanks and armored cars were used in full battle array. Settlements which took years of toil to build have been destroyed overnight as a result of police and military barbarism. Leaders of the Jewish Agency as well as thousands of others have been arrested and placed in prisons and detention camps. Conditions in them are little different from what they were in the days when the Turks ruled. No distinctions are made between criminals and political prisoners.

Emergency regulations have left the entire population to the mercy of any policeman or soldier who may arrest anyone on the slightest suspicion, and guilt is presumed until proved otherwise. By their use of "protective custody" rules the British have discarded all semblance of justice. These rules enable them to hold prisoners indefinitely without trial and without charges. Very often, people who have been acquitted in court are rearrested immediately and taken off to detention camps and held in "protective custody" without further trials.

Under this reign of terror, it is no wonder that a writer in Palestine cried out: "We did not hear of similar 'laws' being imposed upon the murderers and destroyers of our people in occupied Germany. We know that the opposite is being done. We did not see a similar severity in the Belsen trial against the murderers of hundred of thousands of innocent men, women and children. On the contrary, we know that the Nazi gangsters all over the world have been and are being treated with silk gloves by Britain and America."

INTO this critical situation has been thrown a new imperialist proposition, ostensibly aimed at bringing a solution but which is, in fact, a method of prolonging and heightening antagonisms, a method for perpetuating imperialist control. I refer to the partition scheme of the Anglo-American Cabinet Committee.

Plans for partition are, of course, not new. Back in 1937, a Royal Commission proposed that Palestine be divided into three separate parts—a Jewish state, an Arab state and a British sector between the two. The

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commission indicated the real meaning of partition when it stated in its summary: "The problem cannot be solved by giving either the Arabs or the Jews all they want. The answer to the question of which of them will govern Palestine must be—neither."

This "neither" is the crux of the matter. Imperialism is concerned with the continuation of its own power. Insofar as the peoples of any colonial country are concerned, whether it be India or Burma or Palestine, the answer will always be "neither." Freedom for no one. Self-rule for no one. Imperialism remains master.

Unlike the 1937 scheme, which was purely British, the present one represents the efforts of the Anglo-American partnership. For political reasons President Truman may demur in public and may even propose that more territory be granted the Jewish sector. The administration is using the Palestine issue as a political football and as part of American imperialism's efforts to use Zionism in gaining strong positions in the Middle East. The State Department's intervention cannot in any way, therefore, be interpreted as an attempt to bring real freedom to Palestine. There is even considerable evidence to show that the recent proposal for partition was purposely harsh so that eventually agreement could be reached on a more "modified" plan which would not, however, affect the maintenance of control by the imperialists.

One would have imagined that when such partition proposals were first put forward Zionist leaders would have hastened to repudiate them. Unfortunately such was not the case.

Nahum Goldman, a leader of the Zionist movement speaking before the Zionist convention in England, declared: "I anticipate the moment when we shall be forced to accept serious and tragic resolutions and accept them quickly. We shall have to make concessions to a reasonable extent." Everyone knew he was referring to partition. When he was asked whether he meant partition, he replied: "Don't subscribe words to me which I do not wish to utter." And it was this same Goldman who recently flew from Paris to Washington to have an emergency conference with Truman. Could it be that he came not to fight against the partition scheme but for better "concessions"?

Chaim Weizmann, head of the world Zionist movement, told an audience that "partition of Palestine should not be rejected as a possible solution even though one may disagree with it in principle." After the New York *Times* reported that American Zionist leaders had stated that they would accept partition, Zionists hastened not to repudiate partition but to say that they had said nothing.

When the actual plan was formally proposed, the Jewish Agency—a quasi-official body in Palestine—repudiated it at a Paris meeting. It was obvious, however, that their repudiation stemmed not from opposition to partition in principle. There is no doubt that if the plan is made a little more palatable by granting a little more territory and a few more concessions, the majority of the Zionist leadership will be for acceptance—unless the Jewish masses raise their voices against a program which will mean a life of endless slavery and antagonism for the Yishuv —Palestine's Jewish community.

The propaganda that will be carried on by the pro-partition forces will, of course, have many high-sounding phrases. They will throw out the bait that although partition is to no one's liking, at least it will bring a Jewish state. And that, they will maintain, is the most important thing. It will give us recognition they will say. We will have the right to be heard and be represented in the halls of nations.

Despite the sweet coating, it will still be poison. What kind of security is in store for the Yishuv, which will have to rely on imperialism and its military for the establishment of such a "state" and for its maintenance? What kind of economic development can take place with imperialism remaining master?

LET us look at this "state" a little more closely. The present scheme, like the previous one, insures that all strategic areas such as Haifa and Mount Carmel and the corridor between Jaffa and Jerusalem remain in the hands of Britain. The stranglehold over the economic life of both "states" would continue. Railroads, foreign trade, post offices, air bases, shipping, utilities and the major markets would be controlled by the imperialists. Let us also remember that the major British bases would be within the Jewish state. And the entire Middle East struggling for independence will also remember this.

This, then, will be the Jewish state —a British barracks where Jews will play attendant to an imperialist army. There is no doubt but that a few

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wealthy Jews will be quite happy with such an arrangement. They will make some money as contractors and agents for the army. But is this what the masses of Jews have toiled and suffered and died for? Is this the utopia for which Jews fled from Europe?

What role could such a puppet state play in the affairs of nations? India appears in the halls of nations. Is it the voice of a free India that speaks? Is it the voice of the millions of suffering and downtrodden and starving masses that speaks? Or is it the voice of some lackey or puppet who speaks as the master orders?

Such a Jewish "state" is a mockery of statehood and a betrayal of the Jewish people. And those who call themselves Jewish leaders and who accept such a state will bear the responsibility for having plunged the Yishuv into more abject slavery and despair. They will bear the full blame for having aided imperialism in its game of "divide and rule."

Let us remember that the Yishuv lives in the midst of an Arab world, a world which has many reactionary and pro-fascist leaders at its head. But there are also in this world Arab masses, struggling for liberation. And this very struggle, that plunges them into ever greater opposition to foreign oppressors, is the very same struggle that places them ever more in opposition to their own reactionary leaders. The Arabs will be there long after British imperialism will have been removed. These are the neighbors of the Yishuv. It will be either Arab-Jewish unity or it will be Arab-Jewish enmity.

Meier Vilner, in his testimony before the Anglo-American Commission on behalf of Palestine's Communist Party, stated: "The partition of this country would spell disaster to Jews and Arabs alike. First of all, because it would strangle any possible economic development. Second, it would strengthen the imperialist regime, since partition means the dependence of both states upon the monopolistic British rulers. Third, such an arrangement would widen the gulf between Jews and Arabs. The partition plan is an imperialistic program to find a new form for the continuation of the old British rule and for the increase of tension between Jews and Arabs."

In a recent statement (August 14, 1946), Senator Pepper outlined the program which represents a basic approach to a solution of the Palestine question. He contended that so long as Palestine remained in the grip of British imperialism (and I might add —in the grip of any imperialism) there will be no end to terror and persecution. Senator Pepper therefore proposed that: (1) The American government immediately demand that England give up its mandate over Palestine; (2) Palestine shall be immediately placed under the supervision of the Big Three within the framework of the United Nations and preparations should be made to develop Palestine into an independent country.

In the same statement, Senator Pepper remarked that the Soviet Union would be able to make a great contribution because of its own experiences in eliminating national oppression. His proposals represent the only democratic solution possible. The grip of imperialism can be broken and the reign of terror ended only when the issue has been removed from the sphere of unilateral action and has been placed before an international commission of which the Soviet Union will be a part.

"Well, it's like this—inflation means higher prices. So, to prevent inflation they're decontrolling prices upward. Is that clear?"

portside patter

by BILL RICHARDS

German audiences shown *The Great Dictator* were impressed with the impersonation of Mussolini. It is quite possible that Benito never photographed better except, perhaps, on his last appearance in Milan.

●

Former Italian Premier Bonomi says that "Fascism almost suffocated liberty but did not kill it." We wonder whether he's serious or just choking.

●

The War Assets Administration is faced with the task of selling $33,000,000,000 worth of surplus material. Included in the surplus should be the large quantity of brass hats that the Army is currently talking through.

●

UNRRA Director La Guardia has dropped General Morgan. Evidently it didn't speak well of UNRRA to have one of its high officials from hunger.

●

Italian Premier De Gasperi has complained that the Trieste settlement "bites into our very flesh." However, it doesn't go quite as deep as a stab in the back.

●

The Ministry of Labor reports that Britain has more than 350,000 unemployed. No doubt they are referred to as the Idles of the King.

●

General Marshall has stated that a cessation of hostilities in China appears impossible. All the State Department can hope for now is that Chiang Kai-shek is prompt about paying for his supplies.

●

An atomic scientist suggests that it may be necessary for the US to conquer the entire world. It has also been suggested that this gentleman be used in the next Bikini underwater test.

●

The censors still refuse to lift the ban on *The Outlaw*. If only Congress was as determined not to let the country's inflation show.

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DREISER'S SHORT STORIES

"The key to Dreiser the artist is compassion, the compassion of a Hugo or a Tolstoy." A man whose heart burned for his fellow men.

By HOWARD FAST

One evening recently, a group of us set about making, for our own amusement, a list of the finest short stories in the world. Actually they were by no means the finest—there are no real absolutes in art—but rather a reflection of personal taste and preference, yet it was curious how much unanimity of opinion there was—or perhaps not so curious when you consider what universal and ageless appeal a rich and well-rounded tale has.

One of the rules of this game was that a person bringing forth a story the others did not know had to tell it, and it was revealing how many stories, bright in our memories, failed utterly in the telling. While at the time of reading these tales had evoked a certain mood and emotion, the substance did not stand up with time. Flesh and blood were absent; the type of story called a "casual" by the editors of *The New Yorker* is just that, a casual, a glimpse of life that lacks form and meaning. For a story to last, it must hold up in telling; it must partake of something of the richness and complexity of life, the action, reaction and interaction of the human beings who make up our society. More than by the story-teller's art, mood and emotion must be determined by the characters themselves, by what they do to each other and by what society does to them.

Concerning this last, I know of no better example in American story telling than Theodore Dreiser. Certainly, we are a land not poor in story-tellers, and with the possible exceptions of Russia and France, the short story has nowhere else developed to the height and richness it has here. But for all of that, Dreiser has no peer in the American short story. If his short stories are not yet sufficiently known, his own genius is to blame; for his monumental novels overshadow them—perhaps rightly so, perhaps not. As fine as his novels are, they do not attain the artistic wholeness of his short tales; and I say this along with the opinion that no American has ever equalled Dreiser in the field of the novel.

Consider the three volumes of tales Dreiser produced; in the work of what other American writer could they be equalled? Mark Twain's "Man Who Corrupted Hadleyburg" stands with them, as does Jack London's "Samuel"; nothing of Bret Harte's attains the same level, and only one of Sinclair Lewis' shorter pieces can match the average of Dreiser's work. One or two of Hawthorne's things, a piece from Melville, two or three from O. Henry and perhaps that many from Sherwood Anderson: and even in all of these cases, the tales chosen would lose in juxtaposition to Dreiser's compassion, mercy and understanding.

Among the moderns, there is almost no one capable of writing tales like these. The best of today is pallid and inhuman alongside of Dreiser's compassionate searching; the average of today is another medium, outside of the pale of comparison.

Now this is much to be said of any writer, and wherein is the key? It is not enough to simply state that Theodore Dreiser was a unique genius of American letters; that he was, indeed, but more than that, a man born at a certain time and in a certain place, and molded by time and place, so that he could become the articulate and splendid spokesman for that time and place. The turn of the century, the coming of age of American industrialism, the withering away of the independent farmer, the onrush of imperialism, the first great world conflict, the rise of the labor movement, the movement for women's rights, the disillusionment and moral wreckage that followed World War I, the brief intellectual renaissance that spread like a flame across America, the mighty yet earthbound heroes of his native Midwest—all of these in turn and together reacted upon a man who was large enough to receive them and understand them, a man who was a curious mixture of pagan and Christian, provincial and urbane, a great mind and a great heart, turned by the endless search for the truth into a splendid artist.

The key to Dreiser the artist is compassion, the compassion of a Hugo or a Tolstoy. I can think of no tale of his wherein hatred or contempt or cynicism is the theme motif, either primarily or secondarily. His understanding was wide and extraordinary, and where he could not understand he presented the bare facts, as a historian might, leaving the explanation to time. How he pitied those—and their number is legion—whom society had trod down, distorted and perverted!

In "Phantom Gold," for example, and in "Convention," he takes human wreckage and somehow extracts from it all the dignity and beauty of which life could be capable. It is not that he is charitable in his appraisal, but rather that he gives, as Charlie Potter in "The Doer of the Word," of himself.

A friend of mine met Dreiser in the street one day, and seeing that Dreiser's eyes were filled with tears, asked whether something terrible had happened, some personal tragedy? Dreiser shook his head; he had been unaware of the tears; he had simply been walking along, watching the life he saw, reflecting on it. He was that sort of a man. In all my reading, I know of no better statement of the love of one brother for another than Dreiser gives in "My Brother Paul." It is an incredibly sweet and gentle tale, yet never does it partake of the saccharin, of the cheap, of the vulgarly sentimental. A singular love of his fellow man, along with direct sincerity, gave Dreiser the prerogative to go where all others feared to tread. There was no half-way point where his beliefs halted; he became a champion of Russia because he saw in Russia a practical application of the ethical creed he strove so vainly to find in America, and the same logic of his work and belief led him to join the Communist Party of the United States.

Combined with this, there was a

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A.C.A. Gallery.

"Angelo and the Beer Bottle," oil by Gregorio Prestopino.

flair for fancy, an imagination that literally soared. How little those who call Dreiser "earth-bound" understand of him! It was no earthbound mind that sent McEwen down among the shining slave makers, so that he might do battle with the ants, and thereby come to understand the wonderous variety and complexity of life, the goodness of it, and the eternal value of comradeship. That was the Dreiser who sat for a whole night, through to the dawn, talking with some friends of mine after his return from the Soviet Union.

He was full of his experience, his discovery of the youth of the world, and he let his imagination roam unfettered into the future, into a time when all men would be brothers, when war would be only a dim and barbaric memory of the past, along with hatred and starvation and the degradation of man by man.

Through all of his stories, the theme of brotherhood runs as a constant. He saw no lonely existence for man; man was a part of the whole, and if that was taken away, there was little reason for man to exist. Over and over again this theme reoccurs, in "The Lost Phoebe," in "Marriage for One," in "My Brother Paul"—and to a degree in all the other tales. Yet he did not write preachments; the very idea of writing a preachment would have repelled and disgusted him; his stories are filled with men and women and children, with the ebb and flow of life, the color and taste of it. There is no revengefulness in him, no hell-fire. He sees life as it is; he would want it different; but until then the task is to know why it is what it is.

AND what of his writing?

To my way of thinking, Dreiser practiced his craft better in his short tales than in his novels. Most of them are superbly written; he had none of the staccato fears of the modern school. If the need dictated, he wrote leisurely, comfortably, in well-turned and thoughtful sentences. In evoking a mood, in painting a pastoral scene, in baring the soil and contour of his own beloved Middle-West, he has no master, nor has he a master in describing men and women, not their surface features, but the essential and deep-rooted conflicts in their egos. He painted not with the quick, nervous brush of today, but in large planes and solid masses.

Occasionally, too, he told a story with such delightful zest, such light mastery, that the reading of it is a rare adventure. His two stories of Arabia, "Khat," and "The Prince Who Was a Thief," are of that category.

I don't know whether or not Dreiser was ever in Arabia; in "Khat," he evokes a very real image of the place, however, and I was affected nostalgically in terms of my own Arabian memories. Yet the point here is that Dreiser, in these two tales, writes not of Arabia, whatever of the setting he may use, but of the wonderland that some writers create, the land wherein a casual wayfarer may come upon the Sire DeMaltroit's door, or again upon the four directions of O. Henry's roads of destiny. In both tales, his protagonist is essentially the same, the professional beggar and story teller, too old to be of any use. In "Khat," the old entertainer finds every gate closed to him, the world walled up, barred and shut off, a cynical, colorful world, yet somehow not so different from our own.

In "The Prince Who Was a Thief," there is a story within a story, an ageless romance told by the old mendicant with priceless skill, humor, verve—but one which brings him only half the price of bed and board, leading him to remark: "By Allah, what avails it if one travel the world over to gather many strange tales and keep them fresh and add to them as if by myrrh and incense and the color of the rose and the dawn, if by so doing one may not come by so much as a meal or a bed? Bismillah! Were it not for my withered arm no more would I trouble to tell a tale!"

Rarely is Dreiser's tongue in his cheek, but when it is his wit is gentle and beguiling. And meaningfully enough, in all his stories, he laughs only at someone who practices his own trade, the making and the telling of tales—and of course the selling of them, since even story tellers must eat.

I imagine that the moral there was very close to him. He was a giant in a world of Philistines, and the level upon which he practiced his art was beyond the sight, much less the comprehension of the critics of his day—yes, and this day too. Like Melville, he had little enough gain from his writing; but, again like Melville, he remains in a process of growth. His stature will increase with the years—and his wise, searching tales will be read and reread.

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NEW LIFE IN PRAGUE

"Something of the thrill of being there at the birth of a new era will remain with me all my life." A dispatch from our roving European reporter.

By WALTER STORM

I AM writing this article as our train moves from Prague to Vienna. Opposite me sits a young peasant woman with her small daughter in brightly embroidered and beribboned national dress. Next to them is a Red Army artillery captain. He sleeps with his face against the arm rest, his cap over his ear, his plump cheek wobbling with the movement of the train. Through the open window I look for the last time on the trim little farms, the picture-book villages, and the endless succession of lovely wooded landscapes which make up the Bohemian countryside.

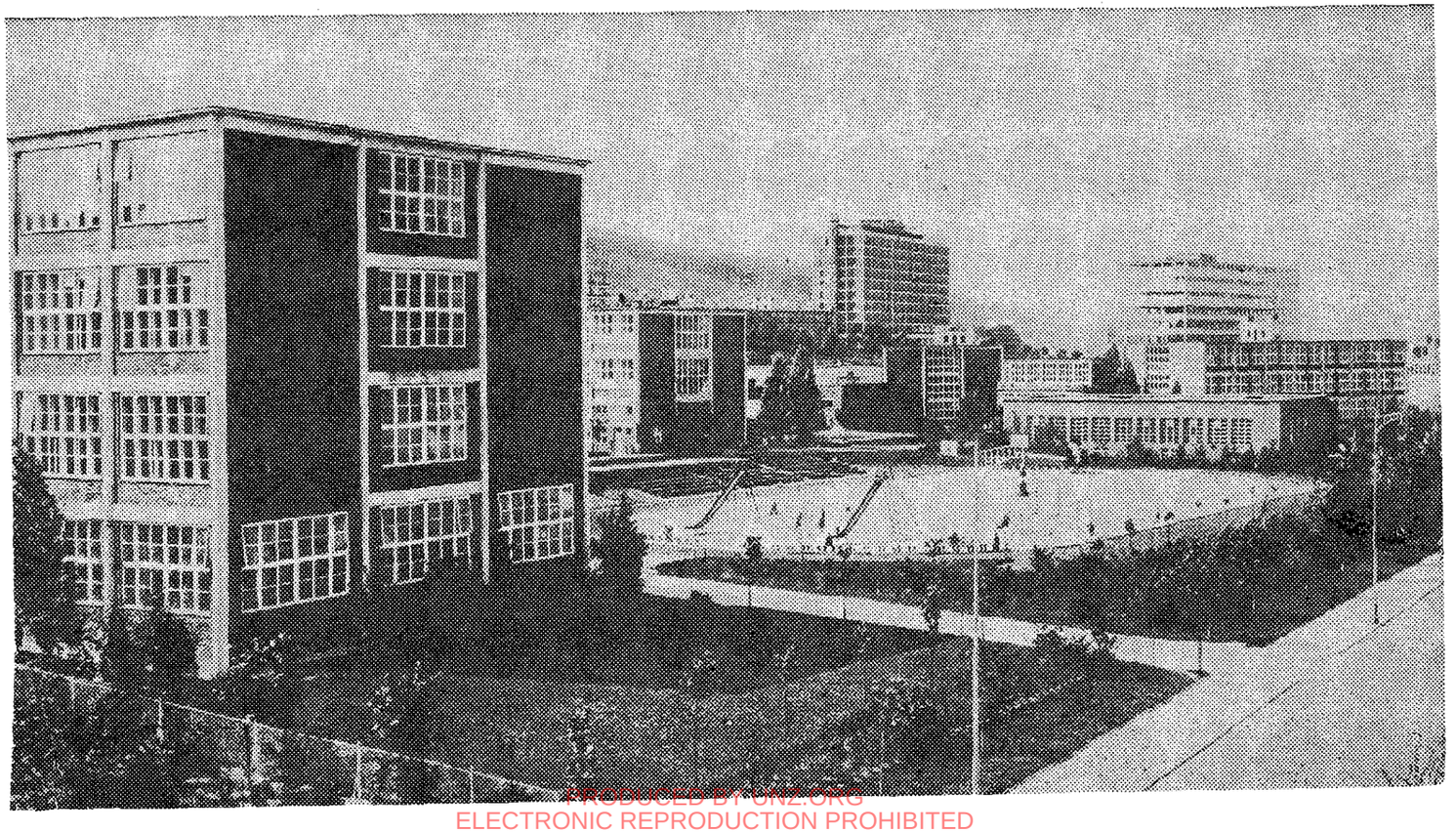
In a few hours we shall cross an invisible line and we shall be in a country which is weighed down by postwar problems, where people are starving; a country where the political climate is radically different. But my thoughts turn to Czechoslovakia—to the crowded six weeks I spent there. It was impossible not to be swept up in the enthusiasm which has gripped this vital nation planning its life afresh. I turn over the pages of my memory, and I see again the scenes which will always remain with me.

I shall never forget the day I arrived in Prague. It was May 9, the anniversary of the liberation from the Germans. Prague, always a beautiful city, was now in carnival spirit, and looked like a huge garden. The buildings were dressed in flags and flowers, the lamp-posts were decorated with blossoms; the warm May sunshine lit the streets up into a blaze of color. The air was full of music and cheering and everywhere was a fluttering of excitement and movement as people danced on the pavements or linked arms and sang Partisan songs. Banners with slogans were stretched across the streets. And in all the shop windows, on the faces of buildings, and on banners carried through the streets, were portraits of Benes and Stalin. Wherever there was a Czech flag, there was a Soviet one alongside. This was the celebration of Prague's liberation, and the Czechs are not afraid to admit that the Red Army had quite a lot to do with it.

We took a trolley out of town, and saw that in the suburbs too the streets were decorated, the bands playing, and the firemen, postmen, soldiers and legionnaires marching. This was no mere official celebration with some speeches by the big shots and a banquet afterwards. It was a great city taking off its hat and cheering and cheering from sheer joy and gratitude.

I shall not forget my visit to the factories in Prague, and the smiles of the workers to whom I spoke. I was conducted around not by portly businessmen; my guides were trade union officials, and workers now elected to managerial positions. On the rounds I spoke to many workers, and I found that they understood the political meaning of the nationalization of industry and their own responsibility for its success. How much explanation, argument and debate must have gone on for these things to be understood so clearly! The benefits of nationalization are not apparent yet, nor will they be for some time. There was Josef Fraimon, bald and elderly, a fitter in a machine shop. "Welcome to our factory," he said, wiping his oily hands on his apron, "I've been on this job

A city of factories and gardens: Zlin, in Moravia, where the huge Bata shoe manufacturing plants are situated.



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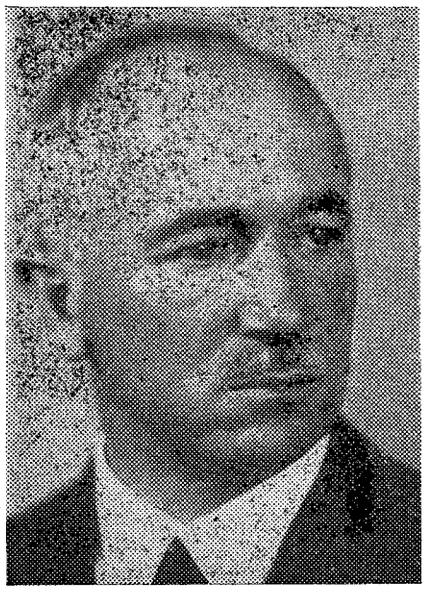


President Edward Benes.

thirty-five years, but I feel I want to work twice as hard now as ever before. These younger fellows are the really lucky ones." And Maria Toska, one of a row of girls filling capsules at a pharmaceutical factory: "When the nationalization proposals were made, they were going to leave this factory out. So we girls went on strike, and got it included. Yes, we strike sometimes, but for different reasons from you people."

I asked Frantisek Mashek, the foreman at a glass works, how the factories are managed under the new system. "By a works council," he replied, "of which one-third is elected by the workers, one-third by the trade union, and one-third by the government."

"Who makes the day-to-day decisions?" I asked.

"The director," he answered, "and he may hire and fire workers. But he must work with the Works Council, who may overrule him. Decisions of the Works Council are subject to appeal."

I asked what kind of people are put on the Works Council. Wasn't there a tendency to elect Resistance heroes?

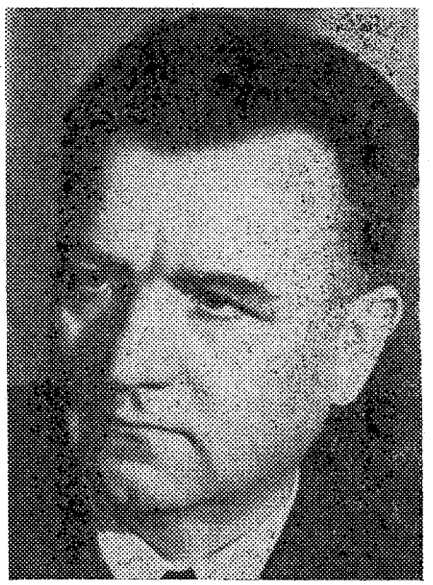
"There was at first," Mashek told me, "but it was soon seen that killing fifty Germans in the Underground movement didn't necessarily make a man a good accountant. Now it is accepted that only technical or administrative experts are to be put on the council." It was all so simple, and seemed to work so well.

I SHALL always remember the Prague Spring Music Festival, the first of the great European festivals to be held since the war. It celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Czechoslovak Philharmonic Orchestra. There were concerts every night for three weeks under the batons of the foremost conductors; and operas and performances by leading artists. The orchestra was in magnificent form, obviously enjoying being back at work again. Somehow it captured that spirit of confident struggle which is the atmosphere of Prague today. Dr. Benes attended most of the concerts, lending them the air of a high social event.

Then there was the visit to Prague of the Red Army chorus—two hundred strong, accompanied by fifty outstanding dancers from the Soviet Union. They played in the cool evening at an outdoor stadium on one of the wooded islands on the Poltava. What was remarkable was the reception they got after the performance. For half an hour, the vast audience of ten thousand cheered and applauded, blew kisses, threw flowers on the stage, and shouted "Long live the Red Army," "Long live Marshal Stalin." Alexandrov, the chorus leader, was so moved that tears streamed down his face. It must be difficult for prejudiced correspondents to admit it, but the Czechoslovaks have a great affection for the Russians. This was just one more sign of it.

There are some grim memories, too. One of them is of the day Karl Hermann Frank, the Sudeten German who became Hitler's viceroy in Prague, was sentenced to death. On that day there was a nervous tension over all Prague. I was in the courthouse when the youthful-looking Chief Justice gave the verdict. Frank was terribly frightened. I believe he really expected to get away with a prison sentence: throughout the trial this man, who had sent thousands to death, had been full of self-pity. One detail of the picture stands out in my mind. In the front row sat two peasant women, with colored shawls on their heads. Their faces were old and set and sad, the way peasants' faces get, but their eyes were bright and purposeful. When the verdict was given they broke into excited talk, and had to be restrained by the guards. Afterward I learned they had come from Lidice.

Some of the monuments to Frank's handiwork still stand. One of them is the notorious concentration camp at Teresnistad, which we visited with a party of journalists. The Nazis used to boast that this camp had one of the best-equipped torture chambers in Europe. I saw that room—saw what would have seemed incredible to the world of fifteen years ago. Machinery for tearing off limbs, for crushing fingers, for cracking skulls. One machine, precisely made, enabled a man suspended by his feet, to be dropped fifteen feet exactly on to a sharp spike. Very neat and efficient are these master creations of the Nazi imagination, embedded in concrete blocks, and turned and welded with the latest engineering techniques. The dried blood and smell of flesh are still there today.



Prime Minister Klement Gottwald.

I SHALL never forget some of the splendid friends I made in Czechoslovakia. Andre Simone and Egon Erwin Kisch, the anti-fascist writers just returned from their long exile in Mexico, were already working at top pressure in the exciting adventure of building up Czechoslovak life anew. I was with them the night before the election, watching a torchlight procession up the main street. Demonstrators were shouting "Long live Benes!" "Long live the new mayor of Prague!" and long live anyone else they could think of. Then someone noticed Kisch in the crowd, and the cry went up "Long live Egon Kisch!" Kisch was visibly affected. "Look, they remember me," he exclaimed in surprise, "they recognize me. Can you beat it? After all these years they still remember me."

Then there was Louis Furnberg, who before the war was a rapidly rising young poet. He was thrown into a concentration camp but was able to escape with his wife and son. Today he is permanently deaf as a result of Nazi beatings and everything he ever owned has been lost. But he is back and working harder than ever. His case is like that of thousands in Czechoslovakia, both in regard to his experiences and to the zest

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and courage with which he faces the future.

I met many people who have been in concentration camps, who have lost their families and all their possessions. Among them I saw not one instance of self-pity, despair or cynicism. Indeed, these experiences seem to have given people a sharper and deeper view of life. Indicative is the reply I got from a young couple when I was taking an informal pavement poll on the eve of the recent election. I asked them if they would care to tell me for whom they were going to vote. "Certainly," replied the young husband, who was in uniform. "We're voting for the Communists." Why the Communists? "Because we love people." And as if this needed an explanation, he added, "You see, we both spent three years at Auschwitz."

I met many Communists, and if I mention Magda Rainer it is because her experiences are typical rather than unusual. She was a Party member before Munich; worked in an Underground cell when the Nazis came; was caught and spent years in the Nazi jails. "Seventeen jails in all," she told me. Then while being transported from one jail to another she escaped and fled to Budapest, where she lived with her family under false papers. There someone informed, and the whole family was arrested and sent with thousands of others to Auschwitz. By an extraordinary stroke of luck she managed to escape en route, but her family went on, and all perished. Today, in her early thirties, she has an important job in the Ministry of Information, which she handles with brisk efficiency. She is well dressed, humorous and sophisticated. She does not consider herself remarkable. "All that is not very interesting," she said when I asked for details of her experiences. I felt she said that because the past is locked away behind her now, and, like everyone else I met, she is working to build up that new life she and her comrades dreamed about in those years in the Nazi jails.

Sen. Rankest Says:

"Why sure we got free elections down here, Mr. Atkinson—here's my votin' machine."

No one who was there will forget the Czechoslovak election. I have seen many elections, but none quite like this. You got the feeling it was all a festival. It was, in a sense, because free elections were one of the things Czechoslovaks fought for in the Resistance. Moreover, democracy has a real ringing meaning here, because the Czechoslovaks struggled for it for generations, and had to win it twice. It was like a man regaining the use of his limbs.

Everything went into that election. Everyone took sides. The mass meetings and rallies were bigger than any election meetings I saw in London. Every kind of advertising device was used, from decorations on steamers, trams and bridges, to neon signs lighting whole buildings. Every party showed such respect for the rules that it was probably the cleanest election fight ever held in Europe. "The Communists have come into a large share of power and not one person got a black eye," one journalist remarked.

I waited for the results in the Ministry of Interior building, with Richard Slansky, the head of the Press Department, himself a Communist. The results started coming through, and when it became clear the Communists were pulling out ahead, Slansky grew so excited he could hardly speak. He tried to put on a show of nonchalance, but it was hopelessly unconvincing. "We won't know until all the results are in," he said. "We must expect reverses, you know."

But his enormous smile showed he really wasn't expecting any. Later we sat having coffee together, and he said, "This is the day we have dreamed about for twenty-five years. But I keep thinking of many of my friends who are now dead. Dead in the struggle to bring about this day. If only they could have lived."

All this has been put down in the rather scattered way it has come into my mind. It is getting dark outside, and we must be near the border now. The peasant mother and her little daughter got out some time back, but the Russian captain is still here. He has asked me in French what I am typing so furiously. I did not realize how worked up I had become, but come to think of it, I shall probably always react like this when thinking of those six weeks in Czechoslovakia.

Something of the thrill and excitement of being there at the birth of a new era, of being on the streets and among the people when it happened, will remain with me all my life.

"WAR," by Lewis Allan

The wounds of earth scarce healed
Are opened up again
The body of sweet earth
Is torn by dying men

New furrows in the land
Hold seeds of running fire
The peaceful little hedges
Now bristle with barbed wire

The dark bulbs planted here
Sprout up in sudden flame
The season's bumper crop
Are dead and blind and lame

Who is the gardener here
What farmer plants this crop
Who sows the field with steel
Who piles the dead on top

They sit in marble halls
And mouth the pious phrase
They hold the ticker tape
And plan the harvest days

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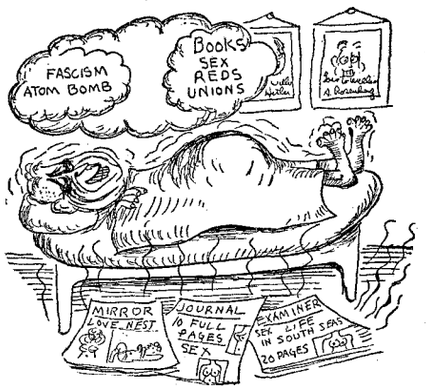

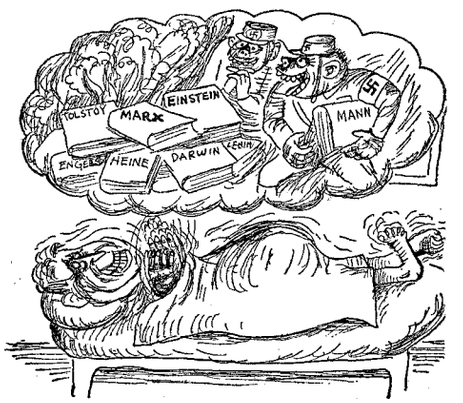

THREE STARS FOR MR. GRUM

"He felt no sensation whatsoever. It was almost as if he had expected this message for a long time. The newspapers would have to be informed."

By MORT BRAUS

Illustrated by Ernie Jaediker.

THE diner was full up and Mr. Grum had to cool his heels fully fifteen minutes before the steward was able to find him a seat. It was next to the train window and Mr. Grum, waiting for his order to arrive, had a good chance to study the Kansas landscape which slid past, flat and mousy under a wintry sky. He chose rather to strike up a conversation with the young beribboned sergeant who sat across from him.

"Say, do you mind telling me what that insignia stands for, sergeant?" Mr. Grum asked.

"Signal Corps," the sergeant said.

"You don't say!" Mr. Grum was visibly impressed. "And that decoration?"

"Tunisian campaign."

"You don't say!" Mr. Grum appeared impressed all over again. "The reason why I'm so interested," the inquisitor hastened to explain, as if curiosity was not good enough reason for his interest, "well, you see, I have sons in the service myself—three of them to be exact!" The father, in urgent proof of this allegation, thrust his lapel pin, which contained three tiny stars, at the soldier. "The youngest is about your age—an aviation cadet. Ought to get his wings any day now. Arthur — he's my oldest — wangled himself a commission in Intelligence. Smartest young lawyer in town and married to the prettiest girl. And then there's Paul, three years younger than Arthur. . . ." His glance softened to a wistful shine. "They sent him to Truax Field to make a radio maintenance expert out of him. It's hard to think of Paul tinkering with radios. Never showed any mechanical aptitude. More the executive type like myself—and a shrewd merchandiser, too."

Having established this lodge brotherhood, so to speak, Mr. Grum could dine with gusto. Afterwards, he strolled into the club car for a smoke. He noticed Ned Merrill, of Merrill Frocks taking his ease, and joined him. When the amenities, which consisted in each forcing his respective brand of cigar on the other, were done with, Grum asked how the Merrill spring line was shaping up.

Merrill's expressive nostrils quivered. "What line?—with the government cutting our quota of goods to the bone?"

Grum grunted sympathetically. "I know how it is, Ned. Been to Chicago to take a look around the market."

Merrill's lips sucked into a tight smile. "Don't tell me Henry Grum, President of Grum & Sons' Department Store, is doing his own buying!"

The merchant's brow became weighted. "Times have changed, Ned," he said. "You remember my son, Paul? Used to be my right hand in the business. Well, the Army's got him and there's no one else I can trust. This is a seller's market, you know. Gotta be a pretty shrewd apple to get any merchandise these days."

Merrill's eyebrows flew up. "So Paul was inducted! Sorry to hear it."

"And Arthur and Robert, my youngest, too!" Mr. Grum thrust his lapel pin at the Merrill Frock representative.

"Darned if that isn't a shame. All three!" Merrill clucked solemnly. But it did not appear quite the jolt to Merrill that Grum had hoped it would be and he increased the voltage. "And in the same year, Ned! Think of that!"

Merrill's head jockeyed from side to side in sympathy. "You must be awfully lonely without 'em, Mr. Grum," he said.

An ill-timed sigh caused Mr. Grum to cough up tobacco smoke. "I'll say, Ned. . . . When you've watched 'em grow up into manhood. Why, it seems only yesterday they were walking around in short pants." His voice became muffled. "I don't mind telling you, we were mighty low, mighty low for a while, especially the missus. But we've simply got to make the best of it. This is how I feel about it, Ned. . . ." He loosened his vest as if it cramped the lofty thoughts pressing for release. "It's no more than we owe our country. Where else in the world,

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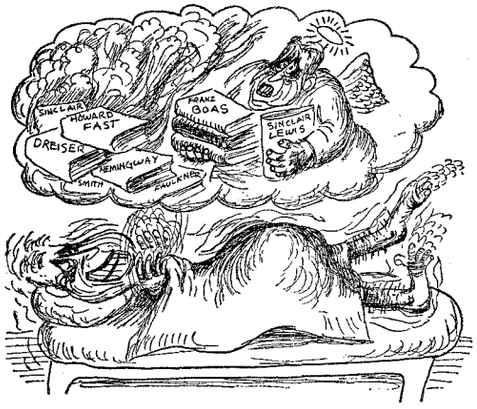
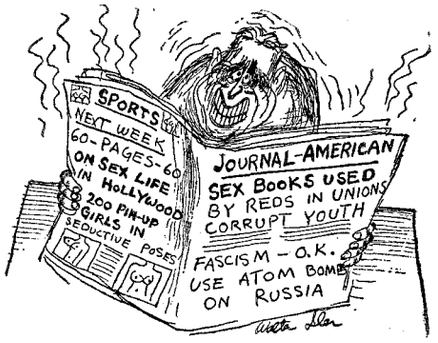
—BY WALTER ILER.





Ned, could a man only a generation removed from an immigrant build a pushcart business into a department store, I ask you? Every time I think of the opportunities—not that I haven't made the most of them—well, it almost brings tears to my eyes, darned if it doesn't. . . ." Mr. Grum's flabby jaws flexed with fanatical determination. "Ned, a man's got to make some sacrifice to keep all that—even if it is his own sons."

In the face of this reverent outburst, Merrill could only comment lamely: "That's exactly my sentiments, Mr. Grum. I just gave my second pint of blood. It isn't enough, I know." He inquired if any of Mr. Grum's sons were overseas.

"No, not yet, Merrill, praise God," sighed the merchant. "By the way, Ned, how do you like my cigar?"

"Swell flavor, Mr. Grum. I'll try a box as soon as I get home."

Grum smiled almost pityingly, it seemed. "Not a chance, Ned. Have them specially imported from Cuba by a friend down there."

"Too bad. How much they set you back?"

"Twenty dollars, a box of fifty."

Merrill whistled. "That's kind of steep, isn't it?"

"Yes—isn't it a crime how they take advantage these days!"

ROBERT, the youngest son, was the first to go overseas. It was in early January. Mr. Grum and his wife were vacationing in Palm Beach at the Royal Hotel when the news came.

Mr. Grum had not wanted to take a vacation. As he expressed it to George Williston, his banker and golf partner, the day before entraining for the southland: "How can a man enjoy a vacation with half the world killing the other half? But I've got to think of the missus. With the boys in the service, she gets to brooding all the time. I just have to take her away some place where there are lots of people. It helps her to forget. . . ." He could not help adding in fairness to himself: "And if any one needs a rest, I do . . . Grum & Sons had the biggest Christmas business in years—tripled our forty-two business for the same quarter. Kept me on the go twenty-four hours a day."

Grum had been surprised to find the resort hotels given over to convalescent soldiers. He was immensely gratified, he remarked to Mr. Murrow, a fellow guest. Mr. Murrow had two sons in the Navy—this gave them common cause. "I think that nothing you do for the boys in the service is good enough," Mr. Grum avowed. "The thing that worries me, Murrow, is getting all these kids who had nothing to begin with used to all this luxury living. Won't it spoil them for afterwards? Will they be satisfied to go back to the old ways?"

Mr. Grum received the news about Robert with stoical grace. He told a sympathetic party of guests the day he checked out: "I never kidded myself. I knew they were bound to go overseas sometime. Uncle Sam doesn't put men in uniform just for parading. It stands to reason you can't win wars without a hard fight. We've just got to be strong and take it. How does my wife feel? Naturally, the missus is upset, but she'll get over it. . . . At any rate, Bob's got a forty-eight hour pass before he reports to POE. . . . We're catching the first train home and show that kid the time of his life."

Sometimes, Mr. Grum's cross became almost too heavy to bear. Only a week after Robert had come and gone until God knows when, he learned through a faithful employe of a move afoot by the sales personnel to spring a wage-increase coup on him. As he suspected, the plot had been engineered while he was in Florida, recovering from his near-breakdown. Mr. Grum took pride in a reputation for fair dealings but this was a foul blow which, he felt, justified resorting to free-for-all methods. He had the ringleader, a pale, little salesman in the children's shoe department, brought before him and then and there offered to make the offender an assistant shoe merchandiser with a hundred-dollar increase to start. The trouble-maker was plainly dumbfounded but he jumped at the chance just the same—Mr. Grum's study of the man's dossier was not in vain.

The salesman embarrassed his employer with his display of gratitude.

"Why, you've got it coming to you, Saunders," protested Grum from the height of a convenient paternalism. "Led all sales in your section for the last quarter. . . . Okay, take the rest of the day off and break the good news to the wife. Just one thing, Saunders, before you go—say, you don't know anything about that bunch of malcontents who've been trying to pull off that raise stunt behind my back?"

"Certainly not, Mr. Grum!"

"Thought not, Saunders. You've got too much sense. I don't have to tell *you* how well I treat my associates. That's because I've always had a family feeling about my employes. Take the farewell party for my son, Robert, for instance—every man and woman in this store was invited and got half the afternoon off. And don't forget those

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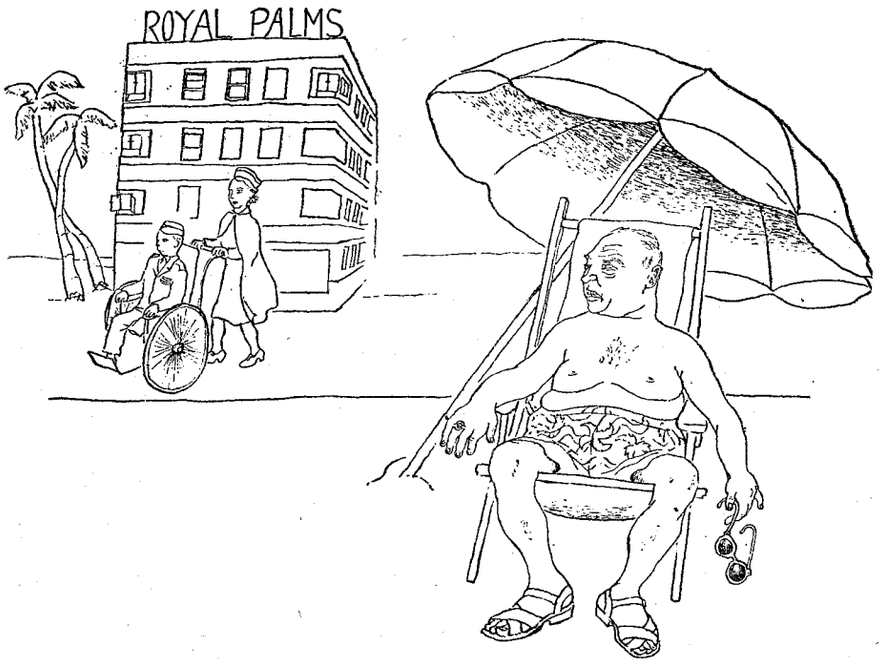

Christmas bonuses—I didn't have to hand 'em out. And how about the employes' discount on all articles in the store? That's equal to a ten percent raise alone.

"Don't get me wrong, Saunders, I believe in unions, whole-heartedly. But to pick a time like this with the war going full blast—it amounts to a hold-up! I don't mind telling you I was sick to heart when I heard about it. . . . I put it to you, man to man—what have they got to complain about? Why, man alive—they ought to be glad they got jobs, clean jobs, right here in town, close by their families, free to return every night to their loved ones, free to eat first grade meals, to sleep in warm beds—"

"Sure Mr. Grum—"

"I know millions of boys who'd give anything to be in their shoes—" Mr. Grum wheeled toward the wall space behind his desk. A service flag with three stars had been draped around snapshots of his sons to form a sort of shrine. He waved an arm at the hallowed trio. "They don't have no nice homes and loved ones to come home to every night. They don't get no home cooking. They don't get no fancy salaries! No, sir, they live in foxholes and are lucky to get rations. But do *they* complain? Do *they* listen to agitators? I'll say they don't—too busy fighting a war. . . . Tell me, Saunders, are the people who work in this store any better than my sons?"

"No sir."

"Very well." Mr. Grum coughed in Camille-like exhaustion. "You can go now, Saunders. And if you run into any of those malcontents in the lunch room, you might remind 'em of what I said."

By May all three of Mr. Grum's sons were overseas. Paul revealed that he was at a staging area in England. Robert reached an air base in Italy and had been assigned to a P-38 Fighter Group. Arthur had landed at Henderson Field, Guadalcanal, on a liaison mission.

Mr. Grum was proud, to say the least, of having all *three* of his sons overseas. Of course, there was the other side of the picture. One day during a copy layout conference, Mr. Grum unbosomed himself to Ed Martin, advertising manager of the local daily which kept the town up to date on the moves of the Grum soldiers. "You see," he said, "you can't forget that the nearer they get to the front, the more chance there is of getting hurt. . . . Why, some nights I just lie awake in a cold sweat thinking about it. Ed, I think if I didn't have other things to keep me busy, I'd crack up. I don't let a day go by without writing the boys. That takes priority over everything. Five o'clock on the dot I call in my secretary and dictate an around the clock description of things here at home. I tell 'em only the cheerful things and let me tell you, Ed, it's not so easy to be cheerful with the whole town depending on Grum & Sons for merchandise—I ask you, Ed, how can we sell folks if we can't get the right goods and the goods we *can* get, they don't like? Like this last job lot right here we're advertising for sale tomorrow—practically have to give it away. Ed, you better oughta write an editorial explaining the goods shortage and tell 'em not to be so fussy."

Merchandising was not Grum's only headache these days—June, 1944. One afternoon a representative of the Department of Internal Revenue dropped in to have a chat with the head of Grum & Sons about the corporation's 1943 return. Mr. Grum was neither surprised nor intimidated by the visit—his attorneys had carefully prepared him for it. The merchant, characteristically, took the bull by the horns.

"First, before you go any further, Mr. Hennessey," Grum assured the slim, studious-looking agent, "whatever Uncle Sam wants is all right with me. He can write his own ticket. He can grab *all* my profits. Look at it like this, Mr. Hennessy: there'd be no percentage to my cheating Uncle Sam because I'd be cheating my own sons." He labored to his feet and swung around to the silk-draped wall shrine. "Because I know as well as you do, Mr. Hennessy that those taxes go to clothe and feed our soldiers and give them the best fighting equipment in the world and naturally I'd like the best for my sons because that means they have a better chance of coming back. . . . Paul was stationed in England. We haven't heard from him in three weeks. You know what that means, Mr. Hennessy, with the Normandy invasion a week old!" To make sure that Mr. Hennessy did know what that meant, he pinned a dread glance on the tax collector. Then he cleared his throat of emotion and forced a smile. "But you didn't come here to listen to my sob story, Mr. Hennessy—all right, now about that one hundred thousand dollars chalked up to capital and expansion—I know what you're going to say. But I planned to double the size of my building way back in 1938. I can show you the plans. Not for myself, Mr. Hennessy. I don't need this business. I made my pile years ago and I'd retire right now if I was only thinking of myself and Mrs. Grum. I planned this expansion for my sons. But the war made building out of the question. So I put the money aside for them. Well, tell me this, Mr. Hennessy, should my three sons be

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penalized because of the war? What the hell are we fighting for if the government confiscates everything? Haven't I sacrificed enough?"

EXCEPT for the tax matter, which was ironed out in his favor, the advent of summer was not unpleasant for Mr. Grum. The customary seasonal slack in sales was almost welcome. It permitted him to take a well-deserved rest at the Springs and to give more time to the war. He followed moves on the fronts in a very personal, fearful sense not unlike thrill. He tried to spot his sons therein as if they were horses coming around the far rail, upon which he had placed his bets. D-Day plus 47, Paul crossed the Channel. He was stationed at a recaptured airfield a few miles south of Paris. Robert had flown several fighter escort missions to the Ploesti Oil Fields. Arthur was inactive for the time being—he had returned to Headquarters, New Guinea.

One windy day in September, Mr. Grum had exciting news to report to friends at the Better Business Club Luncheon: Paul had just had a narrow escape from a sniper's bullet. It seems that the airbase where he was stationed had been pretty badly pulverized by Allied bombings prior to recapture. Every last man was put to work to get the runways into shape for planes to land again. It was while Paul was helping to fill in a bomb crater that he was fired upon by the lurking Hun.

"Nicked his helmet—just think," gasped the elated father, "If that bullet had come an inch closer! Well, you know the answer as well as I do. Guess what else—Paul's in Paris now on leave. Gosh, this sure is a crazy war. One day you miss death by inches and the next you're in Paree having the time of your life. . . . And to think of the many times the missus and I'd planned a trip to the Continent but never had a chance. It sure beats all!"

"And here's something I never knew and some of you boys probably never knew either: they've got a Statue of Liberty just like ours in Paris, standing right in the middle of the Seine River. Of course, it's smaller than ours and don't compare in beauty, Paul says. . . . I just can't get over that kid's brush with death—I don't know just how to break it to the missus."

That was nothing compared to Grum's excitement a couple of weeks later. He was notified that Robert had been among those in his squadron awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Presidential Citation for exceptional valor in the Ploesti Missions. He broke the news with understandable eclat at the executive council of the War Bond Drive he happened to attend that very day.

"To think of that kid of mine, fresh out of college—a hero!" Grum thrilled to all present. "Downing four Nazi planes single-handed! Where do these kids get the nerve from? No, I'm not fishing. . . . He always had a lot of spunk. I remember when he was playing left end for Central High and sprained his ankle. . . ." Mr. Grum recounted the spectacular run.

MR. GRUM had long been in need of a new town car. But he did not think this was the proper time to indulge himself. Besides, there were no new cars to be had, strictly speaking. However, with Robert cited for bravery, no one in town dared look askance. So when by chance, a short time thereafter, his agent got wind of a 1941 limousine that was as good as new—it had lain in dead storage since three months after purchase—he decided to buy. It's true that the price was more exorbitant than had it been offered for sale by a dealer—in fact, it was above ceiling—but Mr. Grum was not one to quibble about price, especially since it was a legitimate business expense. The executive board of Grum & Sons was certainly entitled to have a dignified car at its disposal.

So in the ordinary course, Grum invited the seller, a Mrs. Henrietta Marvin, to his office to transfer title and pick up her check.

The woman arrived at the busiest time of the morning—he was checking window displays for the fall showing—so that the merchant was doubly annoyed when she asked to have the check certified.

"It's not that your credit isn't perfectly good, Mr. Grum," Mrs. Marvin said, "but I explained to you on the phone I'm leaving for the Coast almost immediately."

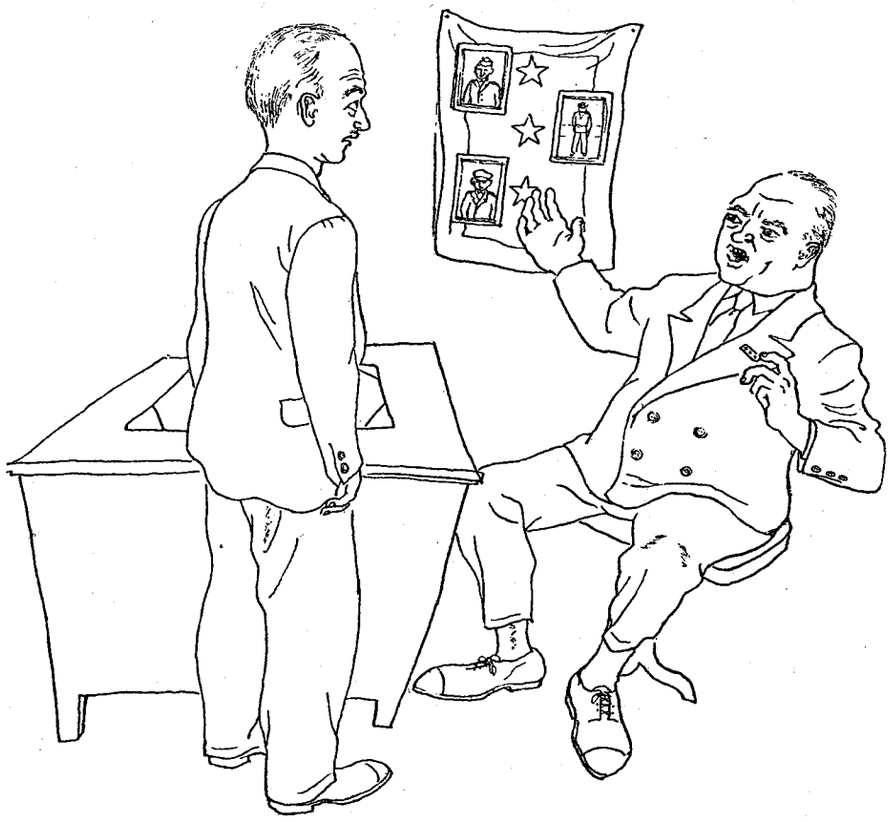
Mr. Grum promptly called in his secretary. While he was instructing her, Mrs. Marvin's gaze roved and she could not help noticing the wall shrine. When the girl had left to go to the bank, she addressed the preoccupied executive: "I hope you don't mind my asking, Mr. Grum, but are those pictures of your sons?"

"Yes, indeed! All three!"

Mrs. Marvin took the liberty of examining the snapshots at closer range.

"You're to be congratulated, Mr. Grum. They're fine-looking soldiers," she commented.

Preoccupied as he was, Grum could



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spare a moment to satisfy the visitor's curiosity. Coming up behind her, he explained, somewhat as a guide at a museum describes the treasured exhibits: "The one on the left is Paul. Used to be my right hand in the business. Just missed being killed by inches in the Battle of France. . . . And that's Robert, my youngest. Fresh out of engineering college, only twenty-three years old, and he's flown thirty missions and shot down six enemy planes all by himself! Holds the DSC and the Presidential Citation."

"Oh, that's simply wonderful, Mr. Grum!" She stopped under Arthur's likeness.

"He's my oldest. . . ." Mr. Grum experienced a slight let-down. Arthur had done little to boast of yet. "The mystery man of the family. A month ago he was on Saipan. Last we heard he was in New Guinea. Nobody knows where he'll be next. He's a captain in Intelligence and you know how hush-hush they are," he explained almost defensively. "There's no telling how far that boy'll go when he comes home —smartest lawyer in town!"

Mrs. Marvin returned to her chair. "You must be a very proud father, Mr. Grum—three such brave sons," she said. "I wish I could say the same, but the Lord saw fit to bless me with daughters."

"Maybe you're better off, Mrs. Marvin."

"Yes, I suppose you're right. It must be very lonely for you, Mr. Grum."

The merchant responded almost automatically, like an actor picking up an old cue. "Mrs. Marvin," he said, "I'd be a liar if I denied that. At times we've been awfully low, awfully low, worrying and wondering—particularly the missus. . . . But we try to be strong. To remember what we're fighting for. We think of all the opportunities. . . ." He waved symbolically at the sumptuous executive appointments of his master office. "No matter who you are—no one's privileged. You've got to expect sacrifice, if you—" He broke off as his secretary reentered. The girl called Grum's attention to the note clipped to the check she handed him. He read: "Paul's wife is on the phone."

"Excuse me," Mr. Grum smiled to the visitor and raised the receiver to his ear.

"Yes, Laura, what is it?" He listened. "What was that? Repeat that, will you?" He turned his back on Mrs. Marvin and listened again. This time he heard the message: "A telegram, father. . . . The War Department. . . . Paul was killed . . . in action."

"I'll be right over."

Mr. Grum thoughtfully let the receiver fall into place. He felt no sensation whatsoever. It was almost as if he had been expecting this message for a long time. He would have to notify the boys at the club. Call a meeting of the employes. The newspapers would have to be informed first off. He would need a photograph. He went to the wall, removed Paul's picture and placed it on the desk. It was not the best likeness of Paul but it would have to do. He was suddenly aware that his visitor was looking at him.

"Excuse the interruption, Mrs. Marvin. What were we saying?"

"About opportunities and the need to sacrifice, Mr. Grum."

"That's right." Mr. Grum bit through his cigar but he did not realize it. "That's right . . . we feel—the missus and I—you've got to expect to make some sacrifice. . . . Goddam sonovabitches! What's the sense of having kids!"

Mr. Grum turned Paul's picture face downward and sat there staring. . . .

TALK IN MONROE

By LAWRENCE GELLERT

Mr. Gellert, who recently returned from a trip to Monroe, Ga., in behalf of the Civil Rights Congress, tells what he heard in that locality where two Negro farmhands and their wives were massacred by a lynch mob last month.

POSTMASTER:

No, we don't hang no reward signs here. This is federal property and the killing of those n - - - - rs is strictly the business of the State of Georgia.

BIG FARMER:

Whatever you grow got to be thinned out now and then. You raise you better crop that way. N - - - - - rs is no different.

COURTHOUSE LOAFER:

More'n a hundred bullets hit them n - - - rs. That's the safest way. Who gonna know whose bullet done killed each of the n - - - - rs. According to law you can't convict nobody, less'n you know who fire the very bullet did the killin'. And who besides God Almighty hisself gonna know that. Not that they gonna convict nobody. They never do. But no harm in playin' it safe.

STOREKEEPER:

Nobody gonna tell nothing he knows, except maybe a n - - - - r. But them crime investigators got 'em middle Georgia drawl thick enough to plug off any leak there, you bet.

COUNTERMAN:

With January close by and Talmadge on the way back, none of them state investigators gonna turn in nobody. They'd get their fat ass kicked off the Bureau sure as God made little apples.

4 YEAR OLD CHILD:

I can't even say hello to you because my mamma said you never know who you're talking to.

RETIRED BUSINESSMAN:

Just you wait a few days and the whole thing will blow over. I've seen these things happen for fifty years and it always quiets down after a while. I'm surprised there's been so much sand raised as it is.

ADVERTISEMENT IN WALTON TRIBUNE:

We want to see justice done for the citizens of this County. Our prices are just as low as we can possibly make them!

BUS STATION AGENT:

A fancy tricked-up n - - - - r asks for ticket to Monroe down in Atlanta. They sell it to him alright but phone me to have the police waiting for him here. Sure enough, when bus hits town one of them suitcase n - - - - rs with

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three-dollar necktie and all steps right down into the arms of the Chief of Police. He was investigating the lynchings of them four n - - - - rs. Had him a nerve all right. Chief of Police ask him if he thinks n - - - - rs done it. And when he said he sure didn't think so, the Chief ask him if he thought a n - - - - r would be allowed to investigate white folks. And then he ask him if he wanted to stay a long time or would he be ready to leave right away. The n - - - r wasn't in town more'n five minutes.

COTTON BUYER:

If n - - - - rs think things have changed because of this war, the last war or by Christ any other war, then they got to be taught the same lesson over and over again. It's entirely up to them if they want the killings to go on.

UNIDENTIFIED MAN:

These killings at the Appalachee were not lynchings, sir. Lynch law is justice we sometimes resort to in order to save time expense and possibly loopholes for the criminal. I don't know about the two n - - - - rs. Maybe they deserved to be lynched. But their wenches ain't done nothing or nobody no harm. That was murder, pure and simple. And I'm sick and tired of hearing it dignified by any other name.

REAL ESTATE MAN:

You want to buy some good cotton land. Grow you the best cotton in middle Georgia, sir, if you can get your sharecroppers right. And since that little n - - - - r trouble we done had, maybe that shouldn't be hard now. And no raise of prices for the accommodation either. Don't mind that. It's only a little joke of mine. But there are heaps of folks think their acres worth more since the n - - - - rs ain't gonna be so independent like they was.

Five thousand Negro and white San Franciscans marched up Market Street to pay homage to the victims of the Monroe, Georgia massacre, and to demand punishment for the lynchers.

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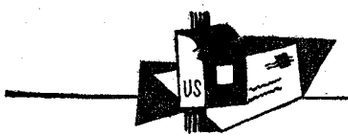
mail call



From Readers in Britain . . .

TO NEW MASSES: Let me begin by saying how glad I am for the fresh air of NM or the *Daily Worker* whenever I can get a copy. Over here people—even progressives—are inclined to think of you rather as you thought of us in Mrs. Miniver and Cluny Brown. I refuse to believe it, though; nobody could really be like that.

I must admit grudgingly that we have no magazine to touch NM or *Theater Arts*, although *Theater Today* is definitely rising, but as yet it is inclined to be rather bleary.

Having thrown my bouquets, I am going to ask you to do something for me. I wonder if you could find one of your readers, a young actor, who would like to correspond. I have written already to VOKS with a similar request. There are all sorts of things that are interesting to the young, unloved unknowns that are not expressed by their betters in public places. Anyhow, even cultural workers should write.

I had better tell you something about myself. I am twenty-one, have been in the theater for four years, now out of work (one-fourth of the union, Equity, members are) for seven months, and I believe in the Stanislavsky system in a practical way, and want to go to Moscow sometime to study or observe.

It is lovely to see you saying all the things about British foreign policy that we dare not, for fear of splitting the Left. Keep at it—good luck.

A. CAMPBELL ALLEN.

London.

TO NEW MASSES: I would like to get in touch with a comrade, male or female, about twenty-one to twenty-six years old, who would correspond with me about once every seven to ten days and is prepared to exchange American C.P. literature, including NEW MASSES and the *Worker*, for British C.P. literature, including the *Communist Review*, *Labor Monthly*, the London *Daily Worker* and *Challenge*, a youth weekly.

PETER E. NEWELL.

London.

Replies will be forwarded. Please include proper postage.—Ed.

the Commonwealth . . .

TO NEW MASSES: Independence Day has inspired me to tell you just how much I appreciate the "new" NEW MASSES. I have been a subscriber to your magazine for many years and think that, considering the difficulties you have, it is a first-class paper. It gives us in Australia an excellent insight into American affairs, both political and cultural.

Especially do we appreciate the Washington articles of Virginia Gardner, who is doing a marvelous job. Congratulations on your consistent fight against Jim Crow and also on the Maltz controversy which we followed with much interest and heated argument. In fact, congratulations to all your many contributors. Keep up the good work!

M. GUST.

Victoria, Australia.

. . . and Empire.

TO NEW MASSES: I congratulate the members of your editorial board who initiated NM as a political-cultural journal of the people, on behalf of the readers of *Thozhilarasu* (organ of the South Indian Railway Labor Union). I earnestly appeal to you that NM must take up the issue of the freedom battle of the colonial countries like India, just as NEW MASSES fights for the rights of Negroes.

The new NM is a pride of the progressive movement of the common working people. Greetings!

RAHIM.

Thozhilarasu Editorial Board.

Golden Rock, India.

Double Check

TO NEW MASSES: I am glad that Morris U. Schappes, in your issue of August 6, spoke out concerning Professor Morris R. Cohen's fine record as a progressive teacher at City College. But I do not think that Mr. Schappes' dissent, in connection with your review of Cohen's *The Faith of a Liberal*, went far enough.

That review was headed "In Fascism's Garden," a title implying that Cohen's book is somehow fascist in character. Such an implication is not only untrue as regards the book, but is not borne out by Mr. Aptheker's review. Mr. Aptheker's critical remarks are, to be sure, rather one-sided, but they by no means support the conclusion that either Morris Cohen or *The Faith of a Liberal* is fascist.

NEW MASSES has been in the forefront of the battle against the Wood-Rankin Committee and other Red-baiting groups using the smear technique. For this very reason your magazine, it seems to me, has the obligation to use the word "fascism" with more accuracy and care.

CORLISS LAMONT.

North Haven, Me.

Greek Drama

TO NEW MASSES: My neighbor and friend Eva Sikelianos, American wife of Anghelos Sikelianos, the greatest living Greek poet today (he has just been nominated candidate for the Nobel Prize), has just received the following statement from her husband in Greece:

"I learn from the Greek papers that Eugene O'Neill, and other dramatic writers of America, have formed a committee one of whose objectives is to invite theaters from other countries to come and play in New York. The Greek papers are saying that since this is going to take place, it would be right for this American committee to invite the National Theater. *This must be prevented.* If any invitation is to be sent, it must be to a liberal organization of the theater in Greece. The 'National Theater' as it is today is reactionary and against any idea or any work that is generous."

The royalists here in America have already begun their reactionary program. You may have seen the following announcement in the New York *Times* of August 9: "Linos Carzis, director of Hellenic Tragedies Inc., announced yesterday that he would bring to this country next winter a company of Grecian players to put on ancient Greek drama. Mr. Carzis functioned in Athens at the Herodus Atticus Theater, where he worked for a revival of the Ancient Greek Drama. He plans to offer here such plays as Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* in the original Greek text, and Euripides' *Phoenissai*. His venture is under the supervision and subsidy of the Greek government. He has established offices at 551 Fifth Avenue."

The Carzis productions are being subsidized by the present monarchist government which has launched its terroristic campaign in order to secure the election of King George II at the coming plebiscite on September 3. Furthermore, the job of directing classic drama rightly belongs to Eva Sikelianos, original director of the Delphic Festivals which her husband Anghelos organized. Eva spent twenty years of her life and her whole fortune to make this possible. However, today Eva, who happens to be in America, happens also to be president of the Greek-American Council, an organization fighting for Greek democracy.

The announcement of the Carzis productions is not only an insult to Eva Sikelianos, but is seeking to undermine the whole cultural progressive movement in America.

RAE DALVEN.

Waterford, Conn.

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review and comment

FROM THE BOOKSHELF

THE BEST SHORT STORIES OF WILBUR DANIEL STEELE. *Doubleday.* $3.

THESE two dozen stories, representing the best of Steele over a period of more than thirty years, stake out for him a claim in a literary wasteland where life and reality are carefully avoided or thoroughly mutilated. This, however, is not a matter of importance to our contemporary critics who periodically sing praise of Mr. Steele's accomplishments.

In the business of avoiding life a heavy responsibility must be given to the role of "craft": for when a story is emptied of its guts the author as a minimum must show his audience a shapely skeleton. In this sense Steele's talent for binding bones together with spit, glue, bits of wire and circles of rouge on the cheekbones is most prominent.

Among the twenty-four best, Steele (with the selective help of Henry O'Neill) presents a dozen tales of the ghost-mystery-horror-supernatural kind. Many of these, without a doubt, are splendid pieces to be told with expression to children seated around a campfire or to be read of an evening in place of seeing a poor movie. ("Woman At Seven Brothers" is the best-executed tale of this type. A thriller in a lighthouse—madness and the roar of the sea—it was written in 1918, a year in which nothing of a more serious nature could possibly have occurred.) The author presses the predictable devices of his craft to their limit, which results in a marked similarity in mood and texture among the stories. In "The Body of the Crime" and "Isles of Spice and Lilies," two stories dipping into a superficial sort of psychology, the tales are so much alike that one feels one has read the same thing twice. Here a craft so neatly dissociated from life fails in each instance to become art and even degenerates from craft to craftiness.

The copyright dates of the tales are almost as interesting as the stories themselves. Since none of the pieces of the period 1918-1919 except "The Dark Hour" reflect those years to any degree, it is interesting to examine that story. Steele's war story is mainly an argument between a wounded sailor and a doctor as their ship speeds through the dark waters of the Atlantic. The doctor, a cynic, believes the struggle is being lost. He is confused about the nature of the war. The sailor, Hallett, has faith in the "war for democracy" and grinds the doctor down with his "burning" arguments. Not only is it a democratic war, it is the Socialist Revolution! Hallet pities radicals who fail to see this and chides those who had been waiting for the Day of the Barricades because: "It seems to me that for days now, for weeks and months now, there's been no sound to be heard in all the length and breadth of the world but the sound of barricades." But what of it? What if in his best story of that war Steele missed the imperialist essence of the war itself and somehow failed to notice revolutionary Russia blasting upward from the earth? Mr. Steele is a story-teller, a man who tells stories and who sometimes makes a small mistake which he insists on perpetuating in an anthology.

Knowing now Mr. Steele's ability to overlook trivial matters it is no surprise to find that his stories of 1930-39 have nothing to do and do not remotely coincide with the turbulence of that era. There's no depression, no Hitler, no Mussolini, no Spain, no reflection of those times—a programmatic nothingness. Even so, if Steele had merely remained in this fantastic world and collected for his fantastic labor the laurels of the plastic literati, the simple tragedy might be that the poor man lived like a happy turnip in a graveyard. But Steele does not allow himself to be appraised so simply. He concerns himself with life too.

Six of his stories deal with Negroes. In these Steele displays all the shades of chauvinism from gentle superiority to vicious klanlike slander. One tale might be set apart from these—"From The Other Side Of The South." Here Steele tells a fine yarn of the trek of a Negro caravan which crosses the Sahara en route to Mecca. A legend is unfolded by the caravan leader which describes the Civil War in the United States as transcribed into native folklore. There is in it a unique but basically correct view of history and it is well told. Yet even here Steele's attitude toward the Negro begins to creep in, primarily in his descriptions. Perhaps "From The Other Side of the South" is free from Steele's typical run of distortion because Steele believes the Negro's place is properly and exclusively in Africa. Steele finds it easiest to refrain from slander when he can regard the Negro as an aborigine, as some sort of curious speaking animal. His attitude toward Negroes in the United States is quite another one.

In "Can't Cross Jordan By Myself" (copyright by Hearst 1930, another uneventful year) Steele lays bare his deep and deliberate bigotry. Since this story is a fantasy in which all events are contrived and invented, no mistakes can be made in regard to the author's state of mind on these matters. He tells of a retired plantation owner for whom his two Negro ex-slave servants show complete love and devotion, while they bemoan the sad results of the Emancipation. The servants live in mortal dread of spirits and are plagued by the master's Yankee daughter-in-law who runs seances. An accident occurs in which the man servant causes the death of his master. The Negro is lynched. Master and servant come back as ghosts. In their spirit personalities the Negro (so this is heaven!) fills the same role as in life, bowing and scraping before "ol' massa." Steele, making very light of lynching, has the Negro in ghost-form hang himself every time a full moon rises so as to pay for his sin. When the time comes to cross the Jordan the master doesn't believe that he is on the shore of the proper river. He refuses to cross. And the Negro, who has lived for this crossing, refuses to go over. He returns to his master's side with the lynch rope in his hand and vows he would rather hang himself forever than cross that stream alone! Steele makes it as clear in "literature" as Gene Talmadge makes it in life that not only will he see the Negro damned on earth—he'll have him damned in

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heaven too. "Can't Cross Jordan By Myself" largely explains why Steele, writing so prolifically over the years, has not offered a story which has in it the slightest germs of anti-fascism.

His "American Comedy" is the tale of an aristocrat weeping over the fact that capitalism sometimes elevates to its heights elements unworthy of such "reward." Steele's sympathies go of course to the "family of tradition" man to whom he grants the subtle victory over the boorish *nouveau riche* as represented by the contractor John Ruffo. (Witness the deep concern Steele has for society!)

"A Bath In The Sea" is copyrighted in 1946. It marks Steele's regression, with all the flourish of his craft, into not only anti-Negroism but anti-Semitism and anti-foreignism as well. Marty Martello is the protagonist. She plays the piano and is victimized by a Jewish agent who wants her money but finds her no jobs because she does not offer her flesh to the Jewish bandleaders. Marty Martello has a blind and retarded son. When she is fired for not submitting to one Jewish bandleader, Goldstone, the agent, drops Marty as a client but demands that she pay him fifty cents of the five dollars she has earned. Marty begs Goldstone for another chance. Goldstone reconsiders. He sends her to Harlem to work with a Negro band. Marty has to pose as a Negro. The light-skinned bandleader discovers that Marty is white and asks Marty to live with him: "I can talk Spanish—pass for a South American anywhere." Marty escapes the clutches of disaster. She returns home and it turns out that she is not a "lowly" Martello after all but a *real* American —Martha Matthews. Before she enters her natural home she takes a bath in the sea to let the ocean wash her clean: "She opened her eyes and let the black salt wash the eyeballs (sic!) and the lids, opened her mouth and let it wash the gums and teeth and tongue." Martha does not drown, however; it is only the corpse of Wilbur Daniel Steele floating there.

MILTON BLAU.

War Play

A SOUND OF HUNTING, *by Harry Brown. Knopf.* $2.50.

THE theme of the play *A Sound of Hunting* is that war, along with its death, spoliation, and mutilation of the personality, produces a new sense of intimacy, of comradeship, of love, if you like, between men. And to illustrate his theme the author tells a simple story. A squad of soldiers up at the front are about to be returned to the rear for a rest when they learn that one of their number has been trapped by a Nazi machinegun while on patrol. The job then becomes to rescue the trapped comrade so that when the squad pulls out they can leave together, as a unit. The effort is made, the Nazi machinegun is knocked out, but the trapped comrade is found dead; his luck has run out. With this knowledge, but also with the profounder knowledge that they did everything within their power to hold the outfit together, the squad leaves.

A difficult theme, with plenty of dangers, but Mr. Brown is scrupulously careful never to sentimentalize it. There's not a line which for a moment suggests Saroyan's approach to the same general idea in *The Adventures of Wesley Jackson*: no phony apostrophizing of the beautiful people now that some of them are in uniform, Nazi and American; no Saroyan nonsense about love for one's fellow men, which, when attached to an ego as elephantine as Saroyan's, is really an inverted expression of basic contempt. Brown also avoids the self-conscious sentiment which was always so disturbing in even the best of Ernie Pyle. Pyle was honest, sincere, but there was never any skepticism nor acid in his dispatches; mother could always read what was happening to her boy without fear of coming upon the unprintable word or the animality of war. Brown's play has plenty of skepticism, plenty of acid.

Brown is skillful in portraying the relationship of the men we see on stage. All the cliches are avoided: there are no hearts of gold under rough exteriors, etc. There's affection, to be sure; but affection born of a mutual desire for self-preservation and stripped to the bone by extreme physical discomfort and all but unbearable fatigue. Two men, grizzled, cold, miserable, locked in each other's arms at the bottom of a slit trench, trying to keep warm as they sleep —that's the best image I know to describe the "love" in Mr. Brown's play.

In several other respects his play seems to me admirable. His dialogue is right, wonderfully right. It sounds documentary, but of course it isn't. Or if it is, it's highly selective. A man has to buck a lot of chow lines, pay lines; he has had to listen to men gripe and gas in the lines, behind the lines, in bars; he has to have an ear for speech and a memory before he gets dialogue as good as most of the dialogue in this play.

What then are the play's faults? To my mind, there are several. The first Brown is probably tired of hearing, but I'll mention it. In the second act, he introduces a war correspondent named Finley whom he chooses to make the villain of his play. Now I don't object, as some of the critics rather churlishly did, to Mr. Brown's going after a member of the Fourth Estate; if that's what he wanted to do, all right. My criticism is that Finley's hypocrisy is obvious, his villainy is trivial and transparent. Such men, when they exist, exist because they are a devil of a lot more clever than Mr. Brown's particular correspondent. They usually have talent, and they're accomplished diplomats. They know how to sell themselves not only to the slick magazines for which they write but to the men they write about.

The play has a second fault, and concerns the climax. It struck me when I saw the play during its brief run, and was italicized for me while reading it. At the beginning, Mr. Brown sets his style, or as Thornton Wilder would say, his tone. His play is to be in the naturalistic tradition, his characters are to represent types. They are to have vitality and wit which is to come through despite their fatigue and disillusion, but they are not to have very many abstract ideas. Neither God, love of country nor political convictions are to have very much to do with their behavior. The Germans are krauts, not Nazis; the enemy is never Hitler, but the German soldier. Well and good. These are Mr. Brown's characters, and our infantry was made up predominantly of men like this. John Mason Brown in his foreword to the play mentions the characters in Bill Mauldin's cartoons; the analogy is apt.

When Brown holds to his carefully defined purpose, he succeeds in accomplishing what he set out to do. But in his climax, he breaks away from his original purpose. He allows one of his characters to become theoretical; his dialogue becomes explicit rather than implicit; he states flatly what for two-and-a-half acts he's been showing much better. By trying to carry his play beyond the limits of the naturalism, he alters his style and robs his play of its authenticity and impact at the very point where it needs both of these things most.

Naturalism as a dramatic form has its limitations, and elsewhere it might be profitable to go into them. Obviously

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Associated American Artists.

"Lynch Family," oil by Joseph Hirsch.

Mr. Brown felt them, and tried to rise above them. I think if he had stuck to his original purpose, if he had allowed his naturalism to cut a little deeper, he would have avoided certain repetitions in his dialogue, and would have brought off the climax of his play more successfully.

A Sound of Hunting depends on something more than patriotism for its audience appeal. It does not coast on the fact that those in the audience may have or have had relatives overseas, or were so much in agreement with the aims of the war they will register the "right sentiments" in the play's favor. By choosing the theme he did, by insisting upon the moral values involved, at the same time underplaying them, Harry Brown gave us an accurate glimpse of the war just fought. This, too, is a tough thing to do. The lessons of a war usually come later on, long after the artist and his audience have begun to understand the nature of the experience more fully.

ARNAUD D'USSEAU.

The Composer Speaks

LETTERS OF COMPOSERS, *compiled by Gertrude Norman and Miriam Lubell Shrifte. Knopf.* $5.

ONE can review this book simply by saying that the compilers of these letters, Gertrude Norman and Miriam

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Lubell Shrifte, have done a job of selection that can hardly be bettered, and that the book makes a most illuminating accompaniment to any history of music.

But such a review would dodge a question that is often asked in critical circles. Can such a book be of any real value to the appreciation of music? Does it make any difference to the listener what a composer's private life was like, or what he thought about music, let alone politics? The argument is a persuasive one. It is that a piece of music, like any work of art, must stand on its own merits. If it is good, it holds within itself all that a composer has to say as an artist. If it is bad, no amount of biographical or scholarly information will make it good. And bolstering this argument is the depressing effect of the great mass of writing about music, which throws together biographical facts that explain nothing about the work of art itself, analyses of form that have no relation to the living message of the work, and psychological interpretations that actually distort the character of the music.

Yet the argument is false. It is the product of critics who uphold a work of art as a thing in itself, complete and unvarying, and see themselves as supersensitive arbitors of good taste, classifying works in various grades of goodness or badness. While such dictatorship in the form of criticism gains a following among people who have no faith in their own minds, it is abhorrent to the great mass of music lovers, who want to enter into their own relationships with a work of music, and who seek from critics not judgments but illumination. And it is only a half-truth that a work of art is a thing in itself. The work as created is always the same, but nothing is more variable than our reactions to it. The appreciation of art is not a passive acceptance, but an active entrance into communication with an artist, or with the civilization for which he speaks. The nature of the artistic experience depends as well upon the audience as upon the artist.

Thus the appreciation of music moves from a level of quantity to one of quality. The first work we hear of Mozart, for example, may strike us as merely light and pleasant music. But as we come to know a second and a third, each beautiful yet each different, our base imperceptibly changes to the point where we are conscious not only of the individual works, but of the great human and social personality that Mozart is. At this point we begin to see new qualities in works that we previously thought we had thoroughly understood. Greater than the impact of any single work is the impact of Mozart's mind as exhibited within the range of his achievement. And it is at this point that biographical and social data take on new importance, for they help to concretize further the personality that has come to life for us through his work. There is no better example of the recognition of such a personality than that of Beethoven, who loomed over the entire nineteenth century as an inspiring and revolutionary figure. And the reason for his influence lies not in any single work, but in the fact that the mass of his work embodied the emotional conflicts, the exaltation of the individual and the new hope for the world and humanity that was brought into being by the French Revolution. Thus he became the composer from whom every artist, in a revolutionary century, drew sustenance.

And we can say that the appreciation of music is not complete until we can see every major composer as such a rounded personality, reacting honestly to his times and so important to ours.

It is especially when the surroundings within which an artist worked become distant from us, not only in time but in their social character, that biographical and scholarly data become of increasing importance. And so the significant question is not whether histories, biographies and collections of letters have any value, but rather what kind of histories and books do we want about the art? For failures are far more numerous than successes. It is necessary not only to analyze the form of a work, but to show how the composer changed preceding forms, why such a change was invited by the new conditions before him, what he tried to express in this change of form. It is necessary to give not only the facts of a composer's life, and an insight into his private personality, but also to show what kind of social being he was, how he fought or accepted his age in the light of the limitations it put upon him or the opportunities it opened up.

Going back to this book, it is apparent that the compilers have a most keen understanding of what makes up

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a living music history. The letters they choose are unfailingly interesting and broad in scope, including not only personal glimpses, and discussions of musical and esthetic problems, but also something of the composers' attitude to political problems. Letters from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries reveal the repressed anger felt by composers at having to please the capricious tastes of their feudal masters. From later periods, we read of Beethoven's contempt for feudalism; Wagner's early flirting with revolution, then his change into a spiteful anti-Semite, a would-be philosopher who flirted with Hegel and Schopenhauer in turn, and announced first one philosophy, then the other, as the only "true" explanation of his work; Verdi expressing his fears for Europe at the rise of the Hohenzollerns, his anger at the weak, isolationist attitude of the Italian government, and his prophecy of an even greater European war; Grieg refusing to visit France until Dreyfus was vindicated; Rimsky-Korsakov welcoming the turmoil of 1905, with its hopes for progress; Shostakovich describing Leningrad under siege. A group of letters by contemporary American composers reveals the great source of weakness in American music—namely, the narrow, closed-in world in which they are driven to operate, like step-children of our cultural life.

S. FINKELSTEIN.

Films of the Week

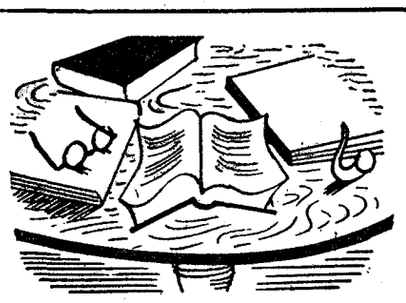
THE title of the *piece de resistance* on the present Stanley Theater bill, *The Postman's Daughter*, may sound like something from the burlesque theater, but don't be fooled. It is an excellent film, better than any French film shown this summer—with the possible exception of *Sirocco*, which I haven't seen. As one of the last performances of Harry Baur, it is a fitting memorial to a powerful and original actor who is reported to have died in a fascist concentration camp during the period of the Nazi occupation of France.

The story, adapted from Pushkin's *The Postmaster*, concerns the father (Baur) as much as the daughter (Jeanine Crispin). It is the tale of a provincial inn-keeper-postmaster in Nineteenth Century Russia. He has a very pretty daughter who has reached the impressionable age and, since the mother is dead, he is justified in worrying about her, especially since the young officers who pass through the village immediately go on the make for her. Complications set in when an elderly colonel assigns a young lieutenant the task of bringing her to St. Petersburg. In carrying out his mission, the lieutenant falls in love with the girl and she with him. When the lieutenant leaves, the girl, Dounia, goes with him.

For the lieutenant the love affair is an expensive one. He is greatly in debt and had hoped to recoup himself by making a rich marriage. Then both the father and the colonel learn where Dounia is staying. The father disowns her. The colonel reveals the lieutenant's engagement to Miss Moneybags and tells Dounia to go back to her home. She starts back, is arrested on a vagrancy charge and jailed. Her father at first refuses to admit her as his daughter and then breaks down. But instead of taking her back to the ranch, he must first vindicate her honor, which he does by ripping the shoulder straps from the lieutenant in the presence of the latter's comrades. The officer, stricken by conscience, lets him get away with it and resigns. But Dounia, who has left her lieutenant only so she will be no hindrance to his marriage campaign, disowns her father for what he has done. That makes it one field goal apiece with nobody happy. The father returns to his village and occupies himself with thoughts of suicide, from which he is disuaded by a happy ending.

The plot, as you can see, is not a very new one. It is pretty much the same story which has been used for all kinds of melodrama and sentimentality with Little Nell in place of Dounia. But the film is an excellent piece of proof that the *how* is as important as the *what*. In place of the kind of sentimentality we might expect, there is an honest emotional quality which gives the picture real weight. A part of the credit for this must go to the actors: to Baur, who is a virtuoso with complete control over what he is doing; to Jeanine Crispin, and to Georges Rigaud (currently becoming known in American films), who works capably in the role of the lieutenant.

There are certain class and social problems involved in the romance of Dounia and her lieutenant which would no doubt appear a lot more sharply to a



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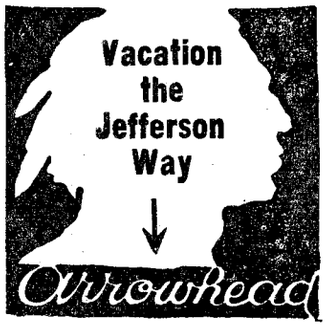

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Russian or a student of Nineteenth Century Russian society than to an American. These elements, thoroughly integrated in the film, reinforce the excellent performances to create a fine movie.

Also showing at the Stanley is a newsreel of the May Day celebrations in the USSR. Produced by the Central Documentary Studios, the film shows parades in Leningrad, Kiev and Moscow. It is the first May Day since the end of the war, and a glimpse of the ruins of Kiev is an unhappy reminder of the cost which the Soviets had to bear. Starred in the demonstrations and parades is the Red Army, its heroes, its crack units, and a variety of equipment ranging all the way from such museum pieces as the Tachanka (all right, let's see *you* spell it)—the horse-drawn, carriage-mounted machinegun of Civil War fame, to rocket guns and some of the biggest tanks ever presented on this or any other screen.

On the reviewing stand are General Rokossovsky and a former newspaper editor and now a Communist Party worker named Joseph Stalin.

If the army is the star, it is nevertheless the ordinary working people who steal the show. When they come spilling into Red Square with their flags and banners, their slogans promising fulfillment of the new five-year plan, Stalin smiles, the generals smile, and the climate changes to about twenty degrees warmer. If some people are honest when they express their worry over whether the Soviet is interested in peace or war, this film may convince them.

THE action of *A Night in Casablanca* occurs mainly during the day, but that is one of the things you probably won't be bothered about. In fact, you probably won't be bothered about anything in this latest bout with the Marx brothers, except maybe—if you are a real Marxist—about why they don't make pictures oftener.

The plot, as if it mattered, deals off and on with a certain hotel in Casablanca where, during the war, the Nazis stashed a lot of loot. After three managers are murdered, Groucho turns up to take over the job. He is ably assisted by his partners in lunacy. Chico, just for the record, is owner of the Yellow Camel Corp., while Harpo is valet to Count Somebody-or-other who is the villain. There are a couple of ill-starred lovers who are mainly for scenic effects, and there is another in the series of calypigous babes who act as catnip for Groucho's libido.

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That's about all there is to it except for the boys, and they seem to have the same kind of enjoyable time with it as with former adventures. Harpo and Chico manage to get in a few fast rounds with their chosen instruments, and there is one sequence involving the packing and unpacking of a trunk which has the old trade mark. For the rest—maybe it isn't the best picture the Marx brothers have made, but all you have to do is compare it with some of the lame attempts at comedy you have seen recently, and you will enjoy it a lot more.

THE best thing about *Canyon Passage* is the scenery—endless vistas of tree-covered mountains, rivers, brooks that probably have plenty of trout in them, lakes bluer than in any country outside the Kingdom of Technicolor, landscapes where only man is vile.

In case you don't recognize the country, it is Oregon, and the time is in the Fifties of the last century, and the men are busy in the process of empire building. Come in a little closer and you can see who they are.

The guy at the head of the pack train of mules is Dana Andrews—call him "Logan" for the time being. The mules are the mark of the entrepreneur. When Logan is not making love to one of two girls or getting his partner out of trouble, or fighting with the villain or just fighting Indians, he is making a fortune hauling supplies. He has a vision of operating stage coaches when they get some roads built. An example of a man pulling himself up by his bootstraps.

The girls are of two types. One is quiet and demure and wants to settle down and farm. Our hero is not in love with her, but for a while it looks as if they would be married. The other girl, Lucy (Susan Hayward), is the kind old ladies might call a hussy, but here no one does. She is the one Logan loves.

However, there are complications. Lucy is engaged to Camrose (Brian Donlevy), who is Logan's partner, and who is also about one-third rat. He neglects Lucy for such questionable activities as gambling himself into debt, robbing gold dust from the safe in Logan's store, and finally killing a prospector. But even in those times, crime didn't pay. With Camrose out of the way, Logan's other girl decides they are just not for each other, and Logan and Lucy presumably, etc., etc.

Oh, yes, there's an Indian fight here, too, and for one of the few times on the screen, the Indians are given a legitimate

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reason for going on the warpath—the rape-murder of an Indian girl by the villain.

Canyon Passage has everything in it but an explanation of the title. It is in no sense a good picture, but neither is it a bad one—at least in a positive sense. The cast is good and everyone romps through it as relaxed and easy as the singing of Hoagy Carmichael. They almost make you think they are serious about it. A newcomer, Patricia Roc, is fine as the girl Logan doesn't marry. In the story her name is Caroline Dance. Pretty, eh? That's the main trouble with the film all the way through. It is just too pretty and a little too easy, in spite of the hardships of the frontier and the Indians.

Among others in the cast is Andy Devine, who is a most implausible farmer. The Devine children, who also appear, are more in character. As children, that is. Finally there is Hoagy Carmichael, who sings a number of songs in the manner made famous in *To Have and Have Not*. If you like him, that's perhaps enough to justify the film.

THOMAS MCGRATH.

the clearing house

BROADWAY vs Jim Crow: the cast of *Anna Lucasta* has started a committee called "Theater Versus Intolerance" to raise money for the dependents of the two Negro couples lynched in Monroe, Ga. A special midnight benefit performance of the play is tentatively scheduled for September 16, with a one-hour broadcast before the show. The casts of other plays are pitching in, with the aid of the Independent Citizens' Committee and other organizations, to make this fund-raising drive a thing of big proportions. . . . The Isaac Woodard benefit at the Lewisohn Stadium showed what can be done. Despite the postponement from Friday to Sunday, August 18, it had an attendance of 30,000, with other thousands clamoring to get in. Twenty-two thousand dollars were raised for the veteran who had his eyes gouged out by a Negro-hating cop in Jimmy Byrnes' home state. One of the biggest shows of its kind ever put on, it was a treasure-house of such celebrities as Canada Lee, Kenneth Spencer, Billie Holliday, Mayor O'Dwyer, Robert Alda, Joe Louis, Woodie Guthrie, Carol Brice and many others.

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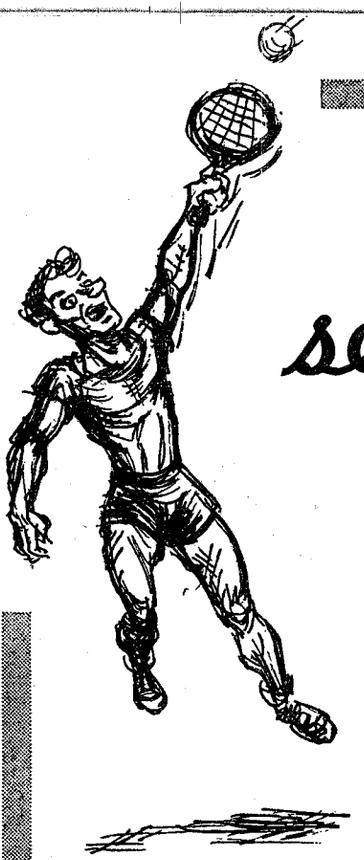
Jimmy Proctor's production of *Barnaby*, Crockett Johnson's *PM* elf, goes into rehearsal next week. . . . The N. Y. Newspaper Guild has become part owner of the Malin Studios building. . . . Diana Irvine has just organized the Yankee Opera Co. with a successful tryout in Philadelphia. Classical operas are simplified, translated into English with the accent on drama. . . . Pete Seeger and Eleanor Roosevelt will share the stage at the University of Vermont on October 19 at the request of the student body.

Ray Flerlage, columnist for the Chicago *Star*, a new weekly, is angling for a Windy City radio show to be called *Songs of the People*. . . . Stage for Action of Hollywood, counterpart of the New York organization, has just been formed and will go into rehearsal with a play by George Sklar. This organization will be glad to exchange material with similar groups around the country. . . . Screen Publicists' Guild may go on strike. . . . Watch this column for information on the PAC radio programs and special song albums recorded by Hollywood stars.

Current History Films, 77 Fifth Ave., the veteran-staffed production unit, is swinging the camera on such subjects as interracial problems, health insurance, reports on big business and surveys on current affairs. This excellent educational medium is available to unions and other progressive organizations. . . . Saul Aarons, who collaborated on such hit tunes as "Picket Line Priscilla," "Capitalist Boss" and "The Horse With the Union Label," has decided to learn more about music and is heading for Texas to study. . . . Bernie Asbel (Peoples' Songs) has a radio show on WNYC 6 P.M. Wednesdays; he will sing original songs written especially for the program each week. . . . Singer Bob Claiborne, while canvassing for Eugene P. Connolly, congressional candidate from the 21st District, was inspired to write a campaign song for the councilman. The ALP liked it so much they made a recording and will use it on sound trucks.

Coming events: Belle Vankin, who did the same work for the "F.D.R. Bandwagon Show," is planning an All-Star Show and Dance at "Club 65," Tom Mooney Hall, N. Y., on October 18 for the N. Y. Committee for Justice in Freeport.

RUTH STARR.



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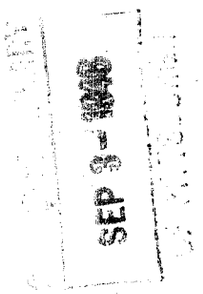

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